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THEOLOGY IN CHURCH AND WORLD

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

VOLUME 7 · FALL 1969 · NUMBER 1

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Volume 7 Fall 1969 Number 1

John M. Mulder, *Editor*

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DIMENSION

THEOLOGY IN CHURCH AND WORLD

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EDITORIAL

PYRRHUS REVISITED

> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them, and God said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."
>
> —Genesis 1:27-28

History has a way of playing grim jokes on those of us who aspire to glories beyond our capacities to sustain them. Take Pyrrhus, for instance. Hailed by Hannibal as a master military strategist, he nevertheless lacked the ability to take proper advantage of his victories. Despite his many conquests over the Romans he was unable to stem the Roman tide in Italy. Although he won the battle of Asculum (279 B.C.), he so depleted his forces that he could not pursue his routed enemies, and thus provided us with a metaphor to cover those situations in which the cost of winning is perhaps greater than that of losing—the Pyrrhic victory.

Recently, radio and television personality Arthur Godfrey announced that he would no longer make commercials for the Colgate-Palmolive enzyme pre-soak, Axion, because he had discovered that it was a detergent. Long a dedicated conservationist, Godfrey explained that detergents, when dumped into a river or stream, act as nutrients for algae. Algae decompose, using up enormous amounts of oxygen, thus asphyxiating fish and eventually "killing" the body of water itself. The distance between the Battle of Asculum and the Battle of Axion is long indeed, but the lesson is the same. We may achieve victory over the stains in our clothes, but we may be losing our environment in the process—a Pyrrhic victory to end them all.

Ecology and the environment have appeared on a significant number of priority lists over the last few years. A no less conscientious curator of the national interest than Mr. Nixon has declared that ecology is the problem of the decade. Senators Edmund Muskie and Gaylord Nelson have been making loud noises on Capitol Hill. The administration and a number of colleges and universities have spawned a bevy of conferences, symposia, panels, task forces, and publications. A nationwide, government-initiated teach-in is planned for April 22. The student movement is gathering ammunition for an all-out war on the polluters. The U.N. designated the Sixties as the Decade of Development, and viewed from that perspective the decade was a failure. It may yet be forced to designate the Seventies as the Decade for Survival. The difference is that if this one is a failure of the magnitude of the last, there may not be too many decades left to name. We may yet be poisoned to death before 2001 allows us to quit the planet.

Before accusations begin to be levied at organized religion for leeching off the ecological crisis the way it has off civil rights, the peace movement and the black revolution, perhaps some serious attention should be paid to the legitimate concerns which are at issue for theology in the ecological crisis. One thing should be clear here. The present need is *not* for the generation of new theological curricula centered around "environmental ethics" or some such construct. We do not need theological formulations which concern themselves with grace for the gutters, salvation in the sewers (make that the Hudson), or faith amid the fumes. The legitimate concern for theology is in an arena where theologians have put the gloves on before, namely the attempt to understand man himself. The issue here lies between man the maker and man the victim; between creative responsibility and destructive irresponsibility; between the Lord of Nature and Pyrrhic Man. Before turning to a few remarks addressed to this task, however, some brief attention will be given to the extent of the ecological crisis, and to its political dimension.

POLLUTION

Consider the following, selected at random from the *Newsweek* article, "The Ravaged Environment," of January 26, 1970.

ITEM: At 85 decibels sound can damage the hearing apparatus. Subways produce 95, power mowers 110, jet planes 150.

ITEM: The 600 brown pelicans left in the United States produced only five chicks last year. The rest of the eggs collapsed because of DDT weakened shells.

ITEM: Thor Hyerdahl, navigating the mid-Atlantic in his papyrus boat last year, discovered plastic bottles, oil slicks and other debris floating hundreds of miles from shore.

ITEM: The Federal Power Commission estimates that by the year 2000 the United States will need eight times the electric power it uses now. If nuclear power plants are used to fill this need, one-third of the fresh water run-off in the country will be required to cool the reactors, and heat pollution of streams and rivers will result. If fossil-fuel burning plants are used, my children will have to explain to theirs that air used to be something you couldn't see.

ITEM: "Progress—American style—adds up each year to 200 million tons of smoke and fumes, 7 million junked cars, 20 million tons of paper, 28 billion bottles, and 48 billion cans."—Sen. Gaylord Nelson.

ITEM: The sixteen mile stretch of the Delaware River between Trenton and Wilmington receives about 1,000,000 pounds of waste daily from 100 industries and municipalities.

ITEM: On Thanksgiving Day, 1966, an inversion layer—a band of warm air trapping cooler air below—settled on New York, trapping all the fumes that would have otherwise escaped. By the time it cleared 168 people had died, most of them elderly with a history of respiratory ailments.

ITEM: There are 1.05 tons of soot produced yearly in Gary, Indiana for every steelworker in the city.

ITEM: Lake Erie is dead. Lake Michigan has nine years to live—at the outside.

ITEM: Last year the Cuyahoga River caught fire.

ITEM: By 1980, at present rates, over 5,000,000 acres of land will have been scarred by strip mining. That's more land than there is in the state of New Jersey.

It appears that the human capacity for self-destruction is endless, as endless as the above list could be if the total travesty could be cataloged here. Once it was possible for men to move to new nesting grounds when they fouled the nests they were living in, but the geometric proportions of the population explosion have cancelled that option. Population requires production, and for every process of production something is consumed, and for every consumption there is waste. Soon we shall be wallowing in it. The population-production-pollution cycle must be broken. The question is: How?

The seemingly boundless American technological capacity may provide part of the answer. The internal combustion engine *can* be cleaned up or substituted for by engines run on electricity, steam or even natural gas. More stringent sanctions *can* be imposed on industries and municipalities that are turning our waterways into sewers. Industrial and human waste of all kinds *can* be rendered harmless, or even converted into useful materials. (One is reminded of the people who are making building blocks from compressed garbage.) But technology creates problems while it solves them. Nuclear power plants substitute heat pollution for smoke pollution. Detergents may be able to disperse the Santa Barbara oil slick, but they kill more wildlife than the oil does. Technology, that process of even more efficient consumption of the environment which sustains us all, may be the answer only in so far as we call a moratorium on its more demonic manifestations to give us time to clean up a littered nation.[1] The problem is fast becoming, if it is not already, not one of pollution (remedial), but one of destruction (irreparable). This, I submit, is a political problem, precisely because the downward ecological slide cannot be arrested or reversed until the overriding political and economic logic which generated that slide has been radically challenged and overcome.

POLITICS

One basic fact must not be ignored: the systematic integration of the techno-economic order with the political order. This means that

> the politics of ecology must start from the premise that present day reality is increasingly the product of a structure of economic and political power that consolidates and sustains itself through the systematic destruction of man and his environment. The exploitation of man by man and nature by man are merely two sides of the same coin.[2]

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[1] It is, for instance, ludicrous to continue to assume industrial concerns are "innocent until proven guilty" in respect to the effect of chemical wastes which they dump into our nation's waterways. The burden of proof should be upon them to prove that they are not harmful, rather than on the public to bear the risk that they may be. The same goes for food additives.

[2] Barry Weisberg, "The Politics of Ecology," *Liberation*, Vol. 14, No. 9 (Jan. 1970), p. 20.

What seems clear from the despoliation around us is that since we have now reached the point where we can utterly lay waste our environment, "our relationship to nature is no longer determined by the forces of nature, but by the rule of political management."[3] This means that the central question is not the control of the environment, not the Lordship of Man Over Nature, but the control of man. Where will we look for assistance in gaining control? Unfortunately, the place where we have been taught to turn will probably afford us the least succor. The Federal Government has decreased its allotments to natural resource programs by 50 per cent since 1965 (from 2.3 per cent to 1.8 per cent [est.] of the National Budget). Although there is plenty of moral indignation among lawmakers, and anti-pollution is about as safe a position as being for the flag, the necessary political clout has still not been generated because the people whom anti-pollution measures hurt most have the most influence. Moreover, the Nixon rhetoric gap on this issue is by now so serious that he merits little belief. In 1969 the government spent only $3.6 billion on natural resource programs, spending more to get to the moon ($4 billion) than to make the earth habitable. Administration policy is revealed at its weakest in the separation of funding for waste treatment legislations and sanctions for violators of pollution laws, into separate bills. This gives politicians a chance to have their cake by voting for the pollution treatment legislation, and eat it too by voting down heavy fines on polluters, who just might happen to be constituents.

What about private industry? Ringing statements of such industrialists as Henry Ford II and G.M.'s Edward Cole assure us of their concern, even to the extent of replacing the gasoline powered engine* . . . "if it meets the needs of our customers *at a price they can afford to pay*."[4] This view of the situation parallels that of Robert O'Anderson, chairman of the board of Atlantic Richfield, which recently boomed into Alaskan oil, who also argues that the cost of pollution control should be passed on to the consumer.[5]

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[3] *Ibid.*

* Which accounts for nearly 50% of all air pollution.

[4] Italics mine. Edward Cole, as quoted in *Newsweek* (January 26, 1970), p. 46. The question may well be whether our needs are being met now, and whether we can continue to pay what we already have in terms of environmental costs.

[5] Weisberg, *loc.cit.*, p. 22.

Thus have some of our industrial leadership sought to fit the answer to the environmental crisis into the same framework that is largely responsible for producing it, namely the production/consumption model of advanced techno-industrial society. They have made a commodity of ecology and seek to force the consumer to bear the burden of their immoralities, with the implication that if the consumer won't pay for it, environmental clean-up won't happen. The additional problem here, as with the Sierra Club and "Save the Bay" approaches is that private solutions are being sought for public issues. Perhaps what needs to be attacked is not the 1970 Plymouth and Mustang assembly lines in order to fit the cars with pollution control devices, but the systematic production of automobiles which are doomed to obsolescence. Maybe the reason we have such vast quantities of litter is because we have been convinced by industrialists, manufacturers, and advertisers that we need the junk they produce and sell. Thus, the real problem lies not merely in the pollution and the threatened ecological imbalances which we are producing. The danger lies as much in a system of thinking which accepts the basic rationality of production, consumption, distribution, competition, and scarcity as it has been construed by the American corporate community. The logic of this system of thinking, in case it hasn't hit you yet, is that anything is justifiable and *must be justified* in terms of making a profit. Technological possibilities must be converted into economic necessities. If it can't be peddled, it isn't worth bothering with. Lucky for us that our businessmen are finding a way to sell ecology, or it would be all over. That logic is the sickness of our situation.

In a political sense the environmental crisis is the crisis of the culture—runaway production and consumption in search of profit and the satiated life. "The critical task today is to raise the issue of pollution/destruction, imperialistic styles of consumption, and of over-population to a political status in order to reveal an arena of political opposition in America which [has hitherto been ignored]."[6]

If further convincing of the political nature of the ecological crisis is still necessary, consider the following. The State of California expended one life, wounded many others, and spent thousands of dollars in the defense of one parking lot in Berkeley. Can you imagine what it will cost all of us when the time comes for the defense of the oil depletion allowances, the billions of barrels under the Alaskan tundra, the super-sonic transports, the power plants, etc.? The political paradigm which deserves emulation at this point may not be "Save the Bay" but People's Park.

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[6] Weisberg, *loc. cit.*

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

Those of us in the theological community must accept our fair share of the blame for the present dilemma, for part of the reason for the present ecological crisis has been generated out of the understanding of man presented by theology over the centuries, but particularly in the theological formulations which have paralleled the technological revolution. In our concern for theologies of humanization, which have gathered a head of steam since the end of the Second World War, we have sorrowfully neglected the needs of the natural environment in which that humanization must occur. In providing the theological ammunition for viewing man as *homo faber*, as co-creator with God, we have forgotten the sacredness of the remainder of creation. As the text at the beginning of this piece suggests, much of the rationalization for the manipulation and control of nature is biblical in origin. The flaming Cuyahoga has its theological roots in the "disenchantment of the world of nature" (Cox) affected by the Hebrews. Somewhere along the way, however, the theological understanding of creation as gift (and also as part of what God would transform and make new), was transmuted into creation as enemy. The biblical injunction to "fill the earth and subdue it" was taken quite seriously, but in desacralizing nature we have also lost our respect for it. A spirit of conquest, hostility, and manifest destiny has crept into our understanding of Lordship Over Nature. Only recently has the realization come upon us, forced down our throats until we are quite literally choking on it, that the enemy is ourselves. Thus the first theological issue at stake here is the issue of penitence.

In becoming Lord Over Nature, men have forgotten that they are also a part of it. The struggle against nature, the enemy, has been won. Nature is on the ropes, not just groggy but dying. But the victory looks strangely Pyrrhic. The irreversibility of technology and the irreplaceability of the environment have joined in a terrifying dialectic in which creation may be destroyed and in which man, who appears to have won, will be the Ultimate Loser, beside whom Willy Loman will look like a paragon of success. The biblical command *vis-à-vis* creation was to subdue it, not to use it up. Thus, the second theological issue here is a re-thinking of the doctrine of creation in the light of the environmental crisis.

Theologians must also bear the responsibility of untangling the twisted logic of *homo faber* as it has issued in a world gone mad with production and consumption. As Sam Keen has pointed out recently, the logic of *homo faber* is really the logic of *homo omnipotens*, or at least is capable of that distortion. Moreover, he says, man's "crypto-theological claims" are "a direct result of the collapse of belief in the creative and informing power of a transcendent God."[7]

The question which Keen raises in this regard has been raised before but is worth keeping in front of us. Keen asks whether man is the architect or the artifact of the technological revolution. Has he become the victim of his own machines? Has the sphere of consumption/production, hitched to the awesome power of technology, become autonomous, as Jacques Ellul and Lewis Mumford suggest? Although not all the evidence is in, Keen intimates that we may in fact have been swallowed up by the logic of our own creations: "It is," he says, "as if our culture were plugged into a mechanical tit which feeds it until it begins to produce waste. *Homo faber* has become a 'waste maker,' the anus of the machine rather than its brain."[8]

The utilization of the environment by *homo faber* may thus proceed according to two distinct rationales: (1) man may assume that there is no wisdom within the ecological structure except that which he either discovers there or puts there, and concurrently, that there is no arrangement of nature which is not inviolable, or (2) he may assume himself to be "first among equals" in the natural order, exchanging manifest destiny for mutuality, superiority for succor, environmental rape for respect. The biblical fact that *homo faber* is Lord Over Nature does not mean that he has no responsibility to the givenness of nature. It may mean quite the reverse, that he has a responsibility to instill in himself a sense of the wonderment of it all. Especially, the notion of *homo faber* does not mean that man is obliged to treat with respect only that which he himself has wrested from nature's grasp. Thus, the third theological task is really the central one, that of a much broadened anthropology which will allow us to understand man much better in relation not merely to himself and to his neighbors, but in relation to *all* of God's creation. The critical theological task may therefore be the forging of new linkages between a revivified interest in the doctrine of creation on the one hand, and a more broadly based anthropology on the other.

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[7] Sam Keen, *Apology for Wonder* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 119.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

Finally, the theological task and the political task need to be done simultaneously if we are to see the way ahead. The political task consists in bringing to heel the corporate and industrial rapacity, the idle wrist-slapping on the part of the government, and breaking open the logic of the advanced technocratic structures of our society. The theological task of this technological generation may well be to leave off Genesis 1:28 in favor of Genesis 1:27, to find out what it means to live *in* nature instead of over it. We have had enough of victory. Given the present state of affairs, our next Asculum could turn out to be an Armageddon, and we would not even then have the comfort of Pyrrhus, who at least won.

—Bruce O. Boston

Bruce O. Boston is a candidate for the Th.D. degree in theology. He was graduated from Muskingum College in 1962 and received the Bachelor of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1968.

ABORTION: A PROPOSAL FOR THE CHURCH

BY CRAIG DYKSTRA

It is proposed that the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS: The General Assembly in 1969 stated in the section on Church and Society in Part I of the *UPCUSA General Assembly Minutes*—1969 that the question of abortion "need(s) the informed attention of all persons concerned for the dignity and well-being of man," and

WHEREAS: The question of proper abortion law is arising in the legislatures of many of our states, and

WHEREAS: The opinion of this body has never been adequately formulated or stated, nor has it actively engaged in the promotion of intelligent discussion nor the proper distribution of adequate information concerning this issue among the members of this Church,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

That the General Assembly:

(1) Gather and distribute information concerning the problem of abortion and abortion law in the United States and prepare an extensive document stating the position of this body on the issue;

(2) Encourage the churches to foster community wide educational programs and debates on the issue and encourage those who have come to conclusions on the matter to inform the appropriate lawmakers of their opinions;

(3) Support the following general model for abortion law:

  (a) all abortion decisions before the end of the first trimester of pregnancy be legally considered the responsibility of the parents (if not wed, the mother);

  (b) all decisions about abortion after the end of the first tri-mester of pregnancy be based on medical considera-

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☩ Craig Dykstra is a junior in the Bachelor of Divinity degree program at Princeton Theological Seminary and is a graduate of the University of Michigan.

tions alone (i.e. the health of the mother and the child) by licensed physicians;

(c) a woman deciding to abort in the first tri-mester be required to meet with abortion counsellors to insure that the responsible agent for the decision be aware of all of the available alternatives to abortion and all of the known possible consequences of abortion;

(d) a woman deciding to abort be given assurance of proper medical care no matter what the present financial or social condition of her family.

The issue of abortion law in the United States is now and will increasingly become a very live and important issue. The ramifications of decisions on this issue are immense and will remain so for a long time to come as the population of this country and especially the urban areas continues to grow at exponential rates, as the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen, and as the types and uses of contraceptive devices broaden. This is an issue dealing with the question of the quality of human relationships possible in this world, and it is therefore indeed an issue of deep concern for the church. If the church is in the world to help make human life more human, to enlarge the possibilities for Christ to work for reconciliation in the relationships of the people and peoples of the world, then the Church as a body and church-members as private citizens must see to it that laws of this country help to form the structures in which this is possible. From these considerations it is obvious that parts one and two of this resolution should be immediately accepted. The model that is described in part three is the point where objection might be expected.

An outline of the problems that led to this proposal will follow shortly, but first it is necessary to ask what sort of society, in a more specific sense, we hope for and wish to work for and how this proposal fits in. The ultimate goal is that each child in our society be given the opportunity to be adequately cared for in material terms, to be given the chance for full personality development, and be given full opportunity to use the body and personality that has developed for a creative and happy life. There is nothing that government or church alone or both together can do to guarantee this rather utopian society. But there is much that can be done given the present society to make this sort of situation more possible on a wider scale than today exists.

These things that can be done include redistribution of wealth so that the dichotomy between rich and poor is closed, better education for all, national assurance of proper medical care, and insurance that no one is forced by law to come into the world unwanted and uncared for. It is hoped that abortion will eventually not be needed as a solution to the problem of assuring these things.

When it is true throughout our society that adequate care can be provided for any child who is born and that adequate control of population is available in a real way to all the members of our society through contraception, then it is hoped that abortion will no longer be the alternative that one is forced to turn to. But at present there are many cases where abortion is in fact the only alternative. Taking this alternative in too many cases, however, makes the mother (and any accomplices) partakers in criminal action. It is an awful dilemma which often makes criminals out of non-criminals. The immense weight of the dilemma is evidenced by the fact that many women will risk death rather than have a child. No woman wants an abortion, but many women get to the point where they have no real choice.

There has been a great deal of heated argument about what to do about this dilemma. Some maintain that abortion is murder and therefore absolutely wrong. Others maintain the opposite, that the fetus is only a piece of tissue and therefore abortion is no different from amputation or the removal of a tumor. Both of these positions seem to most of us to be offensive and not really adequate answers to the difficult dilemma. The middle ground between these two is wide in range. The structure of the problem seems to have four interrelated parts: (1) the biological question, (2) the social question, (3) the moral question, and (4) the legal question. It will be fruitful for the exposition of our position to survey each of these.

I

One of the major questions that often arises in debates on the abortion issue is when life does begin. This is asked to determine whether or not abortion is murder. In a pamphlet put out by an anti-abortion group, the Respect for Life Committee, the issue is answered flatly, "Geneticists and embryologists testify that life begins at conception."[1] There are two things wrong with this statement. First of all, geneticists and embryologists are not at all in agreement about when life begins. Secondly, they probably never will be because the definition of the starting point of a new human life is not a biological one at all. This definition must be made philosophically and theologically although biology might be used to help explicate the different stages of the life cycle.

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[1] "Who Will Live?" (pamphlet), Respect for Life Committee.

Life *qua* life does not begin at conception. The two cells which join at conception are living cells before they mate. Nor is the new cell that results from conception a human being that needs only to grow up. A great deal of change must take place over a period of about twenty weeks before we have what is functionally similar to the human organism. Nor is conception itself a static act. Like all growth, it is a process that unfolds over time. In all of this it is more than just genetic material that makes life. Life is a process of genetic material continually interacting with the environment in new and different ways. The point of this is to show that there is no one biologically definable point at which we can say that a new life starts. We know that at the beginning we do not have a unique human life, while at the end we do. The development is progressional with certain landmarks; but there is no one point in the middle that can be drawn for us biologically.[2] Realizing that there is no exact point where a new life begins we can turn only to what is generally accepted as a differentiating period. In no case is it denied that after conception there is new life matter in the mother's body. However, according to biologist Dr. Thomas Hayes, we "generally acknowledge *human* existence of the embryo after three to four months; but this is, and must be, defined on other than biological grounds."[3]

Let us assume then that at some point after conception abortion is in fact the taking of the life of a human child. This point must be socially defined for legal purposes and individually defined for purposes of personal conscience. These two may or may not coincide. Nevertheless, at some time during pregnancy the moral problem of killing arises, for I think we would all concede that there is very little difference between the fetus just before birth and the child just after. This moral problem is rather obvious and is the basis for most of the arguments of the anti-abortion position. The Respect for Life Committee, which refuses to draw any line after conception, says, "Our basic position is that the fetus is human life and must be protected."[4] This certainly is a fundamental moral question which must not be disregarded but must be dealt with seriously. There are, however, other moral questions which also must be weighed. These have to do with the social ethics of abortion. There seem to be four interrelated problem areas here: (1) the social disease of unwanted pregnancy, (2) crime and illegal abortion, (3) the problem of discrimination in present abortion law, and (4) birth control and population problems.

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[2] See Thomas L. Hayes, "Abortion: A Biological View," *Commonweal*, March 17, 1967, pp. 676-81.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 681.

II

There is no question that there is a social disease of unwanted pregnancy. According to obstetrician Kenneth J. Ryan of Case Western University School of Medicine "the 'disease' of unwanted pregnancy is not usually fatal, but living with it is so onerous that many women risk death via criminal abortion rather than suffer its far reaching effects."[5] There are no exact figures on the number of abortions that take place each year in the United States, but the generally accepted figures run from about 800,000 to 1,000,000 per year as compared to 3.8 million live births.[6] Of these only about 8,000 to 10,000 are legal in the sense that they are performed in hospitals with the prior consent of legally appointed bodies. Those that are done illegally are extremely hazardous. Many of them are done by underworld butchers with little or no medical training. "It is estimated that each year some 400-1000 women die from out-of-hospital abortions, and 350,000 are admitted to hospitals for damage done by illegal abortions."[7]

What are the reasons for which women will demand abortion? One is rape. In 1966 there were 78 known forcible rapes per 100,000 persons in the U.S. This figure is nearly double in metropolitan areas, where it was 143. Few mothers know that in some states there is a provision that victims of rape can have what is known as a D and C

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[4] J. T. McHugh, "Abortion: Some Theological and Sociological Perspectives." Available from the Respect for Life Committee.

[5] Kenneth J. Ryan quoted in "The Disease of Unwanted Pregnancy," *Time*, September 15, 1967, p. 84.

[6] See Robert Coles, "Who's to Be Born?," *The New Republic*, June 10, 1967, p. 11. Also, *Statistical Abstracts of U.S.*, 1969 for live birth data.

[7] "Abortion: Questions and Answers," National Association for Repeal of Abortion Laws.

(dilation and curettage) shortly after the rape. However, one must be able to prove that forcible rape has occurred, and there is much red tape involved.

A second factor is the prospect of a deformed or otherwise unhealthy child. In the womb the child is not completely protected from the world outside. Many viruses and drugs which have an effect on the mother will have a much more substantial effect on the fetus. The most widely known and sensational of these are Rubella (German measles) and the result of the use of the drug thalidomide. The deformities can be so extreme that the child is little more than a vegetable. Many women feel that they do not have the strength or the resources to care for these infants, many of whom die shortly after birth. Many also feel that by allowing such infants to be born they are denying the infant the fundamental "right to be born with normal body and mind with the prospect of developing further to fulfillment."[8]

The life and health of the mother are two other considerations. When the life of the mother is in imminent danger, most people value that life more than the life of the potential child and feel, therefore, that an abortion is justified. Often, however, the mother's life is not at stake but her health is. Many times women feel, and doctors concur, that the completion of the pregnancy would impair a mother's health to such a degree that she would not be able to fulfill her obligations as a mother to that child or her already existing children. The birth of the child might also permanently aggravate already existing physical conditions. In these circumstances it is often felt that an abortion is justifiable. The mental health of the mother is also often a reason for recommending abortion. Many pregnant women have severe psychological problems that would decisively impair their ability to care for the coming child. Few doctors feel that bringing a pregnancy to term in such a case would have a positive effect on the mental health of the mother. Indeed, some feel that the rigors of the anticipation and experience of a childbirth for which a woman is psychologically unprepared have a much more deleterious effect then does the termination of the pregnancy by abortion. The noted psychiatrist, Jerome M. Kummer, states, "My findings concerning the extreme rarity of post-abortion psychiatric illness must

[8] N. J. Berrill, *The Person in the Womb* (New York, 1968), p. 153.

be contrasted with the substantial incidence of psychiatric illness complicating pregnancy and childbirth."[9] Thus, even though an abortion in such a case may not relieve a psychiatric illness, it may be less aggravating than bringing the pregnancy to term. Further, it helps to insure that fewer children are denied the right of being brought up in a healthy, happy home.

Provisions for legal abortion in circumstances involving the life of the mother are made in all of our states. All of the other reasons, including incest, are neglected by thirty-eight of our states, however. And while some of the remaining states make provisions for some of the other reasons given above, only three, including Kansas where the new law goes into effect in July, 1970, make provisions for all of them.[10] But even if all of our states were to adopt laws this liberal it is estimated that such action would make legal only five to ten per cent of the abortions that are done.[11]

What are the other reasons for which women get abortions, reasons which make their actions illegal and often dangerous? Nancy Howell Lee, a research fellow in the Center for the Behavioral Studies at Harvard, has done a study of 114 American women who underwent abortions. It was her conclusion that "the decision whether a pregnancy is wanted or unwanted depends upon an interaction between the circumstances of the pregnancy and the values and beliefs of the individuals involved."[12] Thus, different circumstances will cause different people to seek abortions. Certainly the optimal conditions for being entirely happy about a pregnancy are rarely the case, but generally women do not require that that be the case in order for them to refrain from seeking abortion. Dr. Lee outlines categories of situations of possible childbirth. The first are situations in which it is more likely that the child will be rejected than in the later situations. (These situations exclude those mentioned above.)

1. Previously married women with children, especially if living on alimony or other support from their previous husband.
2. Unmarried career women . . . who support themselves.

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[9] Alan Guttmacher, *The Case for Legalized Abortion Now* (Berkeley, 1967), p. 118.

[10] "Checklist of Abortion Laws in the U.S." (pamphlet), Association for the Study of Abortion.

[11] Alan Guttmacher (speech), Symposium of the New Jersey Public Health Association.

[12] Nancy Howell Lee, *The Search for an Abortionist* (Chicago, 1969), p. 148.

3. Unmarried women who conceive by a man they cannot marry or do not want to marry.
4. Women who believe their marriage is ended.
5. Married women who have reached their desired family size.
6. Women who are newly married or about to be married who have plans which preclude children.
7. Women who have started their family and have not yet reached their desired family size.[13]

The first three of these factors are in the areas of socially defined illegitimacy—marriage out of wedlock. In 1967 there were recorded 318,000 illegitimate births. This is a rate of 24 per 1,000 unmarried women between the ages of 15 and 44 in the U.S. The figure has more than doubled from the year 1950 when 142,000 illegitimate births were recorded. This factor becomes even more striking when we realize the greatest increase in illegitimacy is in girls between the ages of 15 and 19 where in 1967, 144 of every 1,000 unmarried girls in that age bracket had an illegitimate child—more than 10 percent (cf. fn. 32).

These figures may at first be astounding, but consider the pressures that are brought to bear on the unmarried woman (young and old). Our society (at least the middle class portion) is one that gives great reward to the woman who marries. To her belongs security, both in a physical sense and a social sense. She is looked up to as the model woman. The unmarried girl, however, soon becomes the "old maid." This means that she is not a member of society's "in-group" and she must provide for her own physical security with the bleak prospect after thirty (or even before) that this will never change. Thus, there are strong forces of social origin which impel a woman to search for marriage. But searching for marriage is a sexual search. It is given even greater sexual connotations by modern advertising. Soon many women find themselves looking for their security in the logical end of the sexual search—the sexual act. Indeed, it is often estimated that 50 per cent of the young women in our society have sexual intercourse before marriage. Sometimes this act ends in pregnancy, and so we have the illegitimate pregnancy.

But though our society brings tremendous sexual pressures to bear on the young woman, it refuses to accept the results. "The social stigma attached to illegitimacy in this country is such that the vast majority of unmarried pregnant (white) women (89 per cent) will desperately seek and secure abortions"[14] rather than bring their pregnancy to term. The effects of illegitimacy on the mother can be traumatic, but the effects on the child can be fatal. " 'It is the child who bears alone the total burden of his illegitimate birth,' Pearl Buck stresses. It is nearly impossible to measure this burden—the guilt, the stigma, the psychic damage that a child, even when happily adopted, may carry with him for the rest of his life."[15] According to Dr. Karl Menninger, "Nothing is more tragic, more fated in its ultimate consequences than the realization of the child that he is unwanted."[16] But this, our society says, is not the ultimate concern. In making abortion, and in many cases contraceptive devices and information, illegal, it shows that its main objective is to have all conceptions brought to full term even though it in many subtle ways promotes the pregnancies.

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[13] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

The reasons for married women not wanting pregnancies are basically considerations which make them feel that they cannot care for the child in the way that it should be cared for. Some have too little resources and too many children already. For some the prospect of caring for another child is just too psychologically overwhelming because of the prevailing circumstances—even though the woman might not be defined as mentally ill. But whatever the reason, an unplanned pregnancy which a woman feels she cannot cope with may result in abortion, abandonment, or rejection of the child. This rejection may take the form of the battered baby syndrome of which there were 10,000 cases last year. One-fourth of these were fatal.[17] Thus it is clear that even when the society can force a woman to bear her child, it cannot protect the child from the poison that is infused into the relationship of the child to its mother, its family, and ultimately its society. Erik Erikson states that the healthy personality must be based on a "basic sense of trust which depends on the quality of maternal care."[18] Obviously, the quality cannot be high in these cases. Thus, Lawrence Lader suggests, "Our laws must not demand that conception be brought to term without being equally concerned about the child who is born. As crucial as his right to be born is his welfare as a human being."[19]

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[14] Indiana University, Institute for Sex Research, *Pregnancy, Birth and Abortion* (New York, 1958), p. 54.

[15] Lawrence Lader, *Abortion* (New York, 1966), pp. 61-2.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[17] Alan Guttmacher, "Unwanted Pregnancy: A Challenge to Mental Health," *Mental Hygiene*, October, 1967.

[18] Erik H. Erikson, "The Healthy Personality," *Psychological Issues*, Vol. I, no. 1, 1959.

The second major category of problems that abortion presents to social ethics is that of crime and death resulting from present abortion laws. A criminal abortion is any abortion imposed by non-natural and non-therapeutic circumstances by anyone, including the pregnant woman herself. Many women facing the abortion dilemma become criminal not because they want to, but because it is their feeling that it is their only alternative.

There are three general categories of the perpetrators of the crime. The first is the pregnant woman herself. She may try hot and cold baths, extreme physical exertion, pounding the stomach, intake of certain destructive liquids, or self-insertion of some mechanical device (including coat-hangers). One study shows that from 8 to 10 per cent of induced illegal abortions are thus self-induced.[20] The second perpetrator is the "physician" who is generally either unskilled or semi-skilled in gynecological medicine. This is often very dangerous and expensive. This is the area in which the woman is forced to the underworld to obtain help. Finally there are those doctors who with moral humanitarian interests perform illegal abortions, thus subjecting themselves to criminal law. It is estimated that about 30 per cent of all abortions (including spontaneous) each year are criminal.[21]

However, the crime is much more frequent than prosecution. Probably far less than 10 per cent are convicted.[22] The Kinsey study quoted above says that, "Police and other officials often allow known abortionists to practice since it is felt that there is need for these services."[23] Thus, even though the present law does not effectively stop abortion (assuming that that is even desirable by legal means), it does manage to make it a clandestine operation, thus making many feel guilty for doing something that they feel is right and necessary to do. Furthermore, it gives business to sloppy operators and thus opens the road wide to the risk of the life of the mother. Dr. Christopher Tietze from the Population Council estimates that there are from 500 to 1,000 deaths per year from illegal abortions. Even the lowest figure is higher than the death rate from all abortions in Eastern Europe and Japan.[24] One-half of the deaths resulting from circumstances of child-bearing in New York City each year result from attempted abortions (cf. fn. 27).

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[19] Lader, p. 155.

[20] Institute for Sex Research, p. 197.

[21] Harold Rosen, *Therapeutic Abortion* (New York, 1954), p. 6.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Institute for Sex Research, p. 192.

III

So far we have concentrated mainly on middle-class America, but all of the above problems take on an even deeper moral dimension when viewed from the perspective of the poor and the non-white. We noted that the incidence of forcible rape in the urban areas where the density of poor and non-whites is high is nearly twice that of the non-urban. The rate of illegitimacy in 1967 was 3.6 per cent for all white births and 26 per cent for all non-white births.[25] This is largely due to the fact that social sanctions against premarital coitus and illegitimacy are weaker and that contraception is inadequate. According to Planned Parenthood–World Population, "More than half of the 3.1 million non-white women not seeking pregnancy need family planning help, compared to one out of six of the twenty-three million whites."[26]

But not only is contraception less available—abortion is equally inaccessible. The poor cannot afford to go to countries where abortions are legal or the laws are unenforced. Nor can they pay the high prices for illegal ones in this country. Legal abortions in this country are also generally a closed option because of the high cost and the intricate red tape that must be endured in order to get medical and psychiatric permission. We find that "therapeutic" abortions occur five times more frequently to patients in private hospitals and private rooms in public hospitals than in wards and city hospitals. Thus the abortion ratio in New York City is 2.6 abortions per 1,000 live births for whites, 0.5 per 1,000 live births for blacks, and 0.2 per 1,000 live births for Puerto Ricans.[27]

Abortions are not only less available to the non-white; they are also less safe. Abortion, as the cause of death in childbearing relation deaths, accounted for 25 per cent of the cases for whites, but 49 per cent and 56 per cent of the cases for blacks and Puerto Ricans respectively.[28] Well over 80 per cent of all abortion deaths occur among non-white women.[29] The living conditions of the lower classes subtract from the total number of induced abortions, but there are an extraordinarily high number of spontaneous abortions due to the hardships of living.[30] Evidence of the hardships of childbirth and abortion for the poor non-whites can be seen in the figures for maternal deaths in 1967: 19.5 per 1,000 live births for whites, but 32.2 for non-whites.[31] In the poor parts of our society there is less opportunity for unexpected or unwanted children to be cared for. In 1967 the average monthly welfare payment was $40 per recipient and $162 per family.[32] According to Planned Parenthood, "the larger the family, the greater risk of poverty." There is a ten per cent chance of poverty in a one-child family and a 47 per cent chance in a six—or more—child family.[33] Thus, the non-whites are penned in by the difficulty of having safe childbirths and healthy children, and the impossibility of ending these pregnancies safely. When this is seen in opposition to the opportunities of the whites, as limited as they may be, we see how obviously discriminatory our present laws turn out in practice to be.

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[24] *Time,* op. cit. (above, note 5), p. 84.

[25] "The Desperate Dilemma of Abortion," *Time,* October 13, 1967, pp. 32-3.

[26] "Five Million Women" (pamphlet), Planned Parenthood–World Population.

[27] Christopher Tietze and Sarah Levit, "Abortion," *Scientific American,* January, 1969.

[28] *Ibid.*

We must also realize that there is a problem of distinction in the problem of the use of contraceptives. We can only raise the issue here, but it is important to realize the ambiguity of the difference between birth control and abortion, especially in the early months of pregnancy. At the same time we must keep in mind the fact that the development of a child is a process with no distinct breaking points. If abortion is killing, we must question whether contraception is not also. A morning-after pill is now being developed in which the process could be interrupted after conception without any sort of operation.

The problem of population growth is another related problem to which we must pay growing heed. Ralph Bunche of the United Nations states that, "The world is in danger. . . . We are moving toward a situation where there will be more life on the planet than it can possibly sustain. . . . For man, famine is constantly around the corner. People, governments and the U.N. are not yet alerted to the magnitude of the danger. There is little time left."[34] Between 1930 and 1960, the world population increased from two billion to three

[29] Lader, p. 66.

[30] Institute for Sex Research, p. 167.

[31] Edmund O'Rourke quoted in *Family Planning News*, April, 1969.

[32] *U.S. Bureau of Census Pocket Data Book, U.S.A.*—1969, p. 186.

[33] "Five Million Women."

[34] Ralph Bunche quoted in "When More Is Less" (pamphlet), Planned Parenthood–World Population.

billion. Another billion will be added by 1975, and our population will be more than 7.5 billion by the year 2000 if we produce at the rates we are now. This is a serious threat to internal and international peace. Hunger is already widespread. According to President Nixon, "It is estimated that every day some 10,000 people—most of them children—are dying from diseases of which malnutrition has been at least a partial cause. Moreover the physical and mental potential of millions of youngsters is not realized because of lack of proper food."[35]

This is not just an international problem, however. The rate of population growth even in the U.S. is too high at about 1.7 per cent. "This rate of growth cannot be maintained indefinitely. Eventually it will mean severe social and economic dislocations."[36] President Nixon agrees and assures us that "we can be sure that society will *not* be ready for this growth unless it begins its planning immediately."[37] Abortion may be one answer to the high birth rate. "There are two ways to control a rapid increase in number—a high mortality or a low fertility. Alone, among the millions of biological organisms, man can choose which of these controls shall be used, but one of these must be. The choice cannot be avoided; the time for making a free choice will soon pass."[38]

Among these choices are individual contraceptives, mass sterilization, and abortion. One population expert already envisages a "possibility that the government might have to put sterility drugs in reservoirs and in food shipped to foreign countries to limit human multiplication."[39] Contraception is just not adequate. It is not widely enough dispensed; it is not always correctly used; and even when it is, it is not failproof. Abortion can help this problem. We may have no other choice. In Japan the annual birth rate was cut in half within a decade after the passage of a very liberal abortion law. According to Dr. Westoff of the Office of Population Research at Princeton University, "Unwanted fertility accounted for 35 to 40 per cent of the U.S. population growth in recent years."[40] Unwanted fertility occurs when contraception was used or intended to be used but did not work. Thus, abortion would be a vital back-up measure in population control. Dr. Christopher Tietze of the Population Council feels that "if the several states were to adopt abortion laws or repeal their abortion laws, this might have some impact on the number of births."[41] He did not feel, however, that any of the existing laws help very much. With this in mind, Planned Parenthood–World Population has recommended that abortion laws be repealed and that abortion be dealt with as a medical procedure under medical practices codes.[42]

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[35] Richard M. Nixon, House of Representatives Document No. 91-139, p. 2.

[36] Wilbur J. Cohen quoted in *New York Daily News*,-January 8, 1969.

[37] Nixon, p. 4.

[38] Harold F. Dorn, "World Population Growth," *The Population Dilemma*, ed. Philip Hauser (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963), p. 28.

[39] Reported in *New York Times*, November 25, 1969.

[40] Reported in *New York Times*, October 29, 1969.

We have seen that illegal abortions can be very dangerous, but what about legal abortions? Most doctors feel that under proper conditions abortions are quite safe. Dr. Tietze says, "The risks of abortion are only one-tenth as dangerous as those attending pregnancy and childbirth."[43] There has been a vacuum method developed in Russia and Eastern Europe which reported 97 per cent of the cases without any complications and the remaining three per cent with only minor complications."[44] Most psychiatrists have found negligible psychological sequelae of abortion. Lader states that "it seems obvious that psychic damage from abortion is mainly a product of myth. In fact, a few experts are beginning to realize that much of the harm that can be substantiated is less the result of internal trauma than of guilt imposed on the women by society."[45] Indeed, according to Dr. Anthony Dede of Princeton Hospital, the highest poll support for liberal abortion laws come from psychiatrists.[46] Thus, under proper conditions, abortion appears to be a very safe procedure.

There is one further consideration that must be taken into account. It is raised by Paul Ramsey in a letter written to the editors of *Christianity and Crisis.* "Legalized abortions," says Ramsey, "[will] create an abortifacient society, where the legislation helps to remove the feeling that abortion is wrong."[47] He feels that it will help people to escape the real ethical dilemma rather than to make them personally face it more strenuously. This fear of moral decay is also apparent in the thought of those who foresee creeping infanticide and euthenasia. Some who have had experience in other countries feel that this may be a valid argument. "Abortion has become so popular in our country that it is almost a fashion," said a doctor in the Public Health Department of Japan.[48] Mrs. Jill Knight, a member of British Parliament, says that in eighteen months after Britain passed a very liberal law, the total number of abortions rose from 10,000 per year to 52,000 per year because every woman feels that she has a right to abortion and thus many more take advantage of it.[49]

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[41] Christopher Tietze, Public Hearing before the Commission to Study the New Jersey Statutes Relating to Abortion, Hon. William Crane, chairman, 1968, p. 12.

[42] Policy Statement No. 2, Planned Parenthood–World Population.

[43] Lader, p. 17.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[46] Anthony Dede (speech), Symposium of New Jersey Public Health Association.

[47] Paul Ramsey (letter), *Christianity and Crisis,* August 7, 1967, pp. 195-6.

These conclusions may be true, although they are not unanimously agreed upon. But even if they are, there are several further questions which must be asked: (1) Does this have any deleterious social effect that overrides the social benefits achieved by the liberalized laws? (2) Is it not true that every woman does indeed have the right to abortion if she feels that it is the morally right thing to do? (3) Is it the law's responsibility to punish a woman when she acts immorally even according to her own standards? (4) Are there things the society can do to relieve the abortifacient mood, if that is generally desired, besides making strict abortion laws?

To answer the first question, we must respond that considering the social evils that result from strict abortion laws as we have described above, the fact that more people want abortions is not surprising. This may occur less from a lack of respect for life than from a positive search for a higher quality of life made possible by having children when they are wanted. Secondly, we feel that it is indeed the right of the mother to decide when she shall have children. Only she can know when it is possible to provide the kind of environment and care to raise healthy and happy children. In response to the third question we might point out that no one is prosecuted for excessive smoking which might cause one's own death and which many feel is immoral. We are beginning to realize that law will not make people moral and that law has no business in personal morality unless immoral acts impinge upon the rights of other living humans. Fourthly, there are things that society can do to control the pressures that make women seek abortions. It can provide more adequate housing, education, and medical care; it can disseminate birth control information and devices; it can tone down its advertising; it can make mothers of illegitimate children more comfortable in the society; and it can take pressure off of women to marry. The immorality of the social forces bearing on women who feel the need for abortion is much greater than the immorality of the minority of women who abort capriciously.

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[48] Institute for Sex Research, p. 220.

[49] Jill Knight (speech), Symposium for New Jersey Public Health Association.

The appropriate emphasis of the ethical issue should be on the possibilities of making the life of the child that is born more human, not on the elimination of the fetus. This position is made more explicit by Ronald Green who puts the problem of the ethics of abortion in terms of promise-keeping. According to Green, when we allow abortion for victims of rape (even by the D and C method), we are expressing recognition that the mother's volition to bear a child assumes primary ethical status—even above obligation to the fetus. He says that implicit in the voluntary sexual act is a promise made to the future child (as opposed to the fetus). There are some circumstances when this promise is invalidated. These circumstances are those in which the promise cannot be fulfilled for some reason, or when keeping the promise would be harmful to the recipient. The problem of deciding whether or not this promise can be kept is the mother's responsibility. If she breaks the promise arbitrarily then the guilt and shame are hers to bear, not society's. In no case can law insure this promise will be kept, but in many cases the law usurps the opportunity for the mother to accept and fulfill her ethical responsibilities. Thus, what is the ethical issue is not the life itself, but the promise to life.[50] This ethical emphasis is supported by Paul Ramsey[51] and seems to us to allow for room to see the dilemma through in responsible fashion.

IV

We now come to the legal question. What laws should the state pass and what responsibility does the state have concerning the question of abortion? There seem to be three general positions: (1) Abortion is murder and as such should be illegal in all cases; (2) abortion is wrong but there are circumstances where it may be necessary; therefore the law should prescribe what those circumstances may be and outlaw all others; and (3) abortion is not the business of law at all and all abortion laws should therefore be repealed.

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[50] Ronald M. Green, "Abortion and Promise-Keeping," *Christianity and Crisis*, May 17, 1967, pp. 109-13.

[51] Ramsey, p. 195.

The first suggestion does not take into consideration the full breadth of the dilemma. It is ignorant of what really constitutes life. It must be acknowledged that many who have proposed the first type of legislation see the need for alleviating the social ills that bring about the need for abortion and this is included in their proposals. But even then the legislation in this direction is inadequate for two reasons. First, these social problems are so deep in our society and so myriad in number and ramifications that even if legislation could be passed and money provided, it would take years to cure these social ills—if it can ever be done. One has only to note the difficulty of getting appropriations for aid to education, for adequate housing, for money to alleviate hunger to realize how long it will take to cure these social ills. Secondly, not all of the reasons for conscientious abortion are results of social problems. There are circumstances where personal considerations that cannot be changed by manipulation of the social matrix are responsible warrants for abortion. Many problems stem from individual problems of physical and psychological illness which no amounts of money from anyone can cure. Only if failproof contraception were available would the need for abortion be eradicated. This is not the case, nor is it expected to be. Thus, the first legal posture must be rejected.

The second position is one where legal conditions for abortion must be met. Laws of this type are found in all of the states in the U.S. including those with more liberal laws. These laws also obtain in most foreign countries including Sweden and other Scandinavian countries. Some of these laws do allow abortions when health factors of the mother and child are considered and when the pregnancy results from rape or incest. But they still do not reduce the number of illegal abortions. In Sweden only five per cent of the live births resulted in legal abortions[52] which is far below the percentage of abortions that were taking place. There was no evidence found of a reduction of illegal abortion.[53] The same has been found to be true in Colorado where the first liberal abortion law was passed in this country. California found a reduction of 20 per cent,[54] but that is still far too small. Under far more liberal laws in Japan, the USSR, and countries of Eastern Europe, however, criminal abortions and maternal deaths declined sharply. In Czechoslovakia, for example, deaths and complications from abortions were cut to zero.[55] Thus, abortions must be readily available in order to cut criminality, the major cause of maternal death. Secondly, these laws are still discriminatory. They require extensive pre-abortive consultation which costs a great deal of money. Furthermore, the average cost of abortions in Colorado is estimated at around $500,[56] which is extremely prohibitive to the poor. Thirdly, as has been pointed out above, these provisions cover relatively few abortions so only a negligible dent has been made in the population problem. And lastly, the ethical agent still remains the state rather than the mother, to whom the decision properly belongs. Thus, this second legal position must be rejected.

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[52] Institute for Sex Research, p. 222.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 224.

[54] Reported in *New York Times*, December 8, 1969.

The third legal position is more hopeful than the other two. It has the distinct advantage of allowing the ethical responsibility to be borne by the proper agent—the mother. This position is supported by some thinkers who feel that abortion is wrong in all cases.[57] This position goes furthest to help alleviate the social evils that attend strict abortion laws. The only reason that we support any legal interference into the problem of abortion is the positive reason of public health. It is felt that we must act positively to insure that safe abortions are available to all without discrimination. The three month limit is arrived at for public health reasons also. It was found in Hungary that the maternal death rate sharply rose from six per 100,000 to 300 per 100,000 between abortions done during the first tri-mester and those done during the second tri-mester. Finally, perhaps some of the social stigma of responsible abortion can be alleviated through a positive law, better than it can by the negative act of repeal.

Our proposal is somewhat of a mixture of alternatives two and three. Part (a) of our proposal allows the mother the right to bear her own ethical responsibility by giving her time to make a decision as to whether or not the "promise" can be kept in social and personal terms. Part (b) insures that an unkeepable promise will not be forced on the mother due to medical complications while it draws a distinct line to insure society that its order will not be corrupted by infanticide. Furthermore, through parts (c) and (d), it assures both the mother and the society that the implications of abortion are known as fully as is guaranteeably possible by the ethical agent, and that the ensuing decision will be implemented fairly and indiscriminately for all of the members of society.

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[55] Ruth Roemer, "Abortion Law: The Approaches of Different Nations," *American Journal of Public Health*, November, 1967.

[56] Reported in *New York Times*, December 8, 1969.

[57] Notably, Robert F. Drinan, Jesuit lawyer and chairman of the American Bar Association Family Law Section.

My model for legislation has been proposed in part by the American Baptist Convention of 1968.[58] It closely follows the law recommended by Dr. Alan Guttmacher of the Planned Parenthood–World Population.[59] Many others have already proposed massive support for dispensation of information and assurance of a supportive environment for all mothers and children. All of us are interested in the protection of the social sanctity of life. There are many groups, both religious and social, who might be willing to support this resolution, including the many groups around the country who support and work actively for the repeal of abortion laws. A Gallup poll taken in November of 1969 asked the following question: "Would you favor or oppose a law which would permit a woman to go to a doctor to end pregnancy at any time during the first three months?" Forty per cent of the national sample indicated that they would favor such a law and only fifty per cent were opposed. Of those with college educations 58 per cent were in favor.[60]

There are legal problems that must be investigated before this model could be enacted. There are also financial and bureaucratic ones of staffing counselling services and providing proper medical care. Since this proposal has not been investigated or tried before in exactly this manner, and since abortion statistics are so difficult to gather, it is impossible for me to estimate the cost of the proposal. Cost comparisons could be made in investigations of the medical programs in Britain and the counselling programs in Sweden. In any case, it is such a pressing problem and so important to the fabric of our society that it should be acted upon immediately. The cost of not doing something on this order will, in the long run, take a far greater financial and human toll than will the implementation of this proposal.

[58] Quoted in *Trends*, March, 1969, p. 17.
[59] Guttmacher (speech), op. cit. (see note above, 11).
[60] Reported in *New York Times*, November 30, 1969.

A PSYCHO-THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF JOHN CALVIN'S IDENTIFICATION WITH DAVID

BY GLENN F. FIELDS

No SCHOLAR can doubt the fact that John Calvin enjoyed reading the Psalms. In the Preface to his five-volume commentary on the Psalms, Calvin tells us that "if the reading of these my COMMENTARIES confer as much benefit on the Church of God as I myself have reaped advantage from the composition of them, I shall have no reason to regret that I have undertaken this work."[1] On the next page, one finds Calvin saying that a study of the Psalms often leaves him speechless; "the varied and resplendid riches which are contained in this treasury is no easy matter to express in words."[2] In a sentence, therefore, Calvin "identifies" with the Psalms.

Calvin's encomium and love for the Psalms was not only directed to an impersonal corpus of writing; Calvin also praised David, the man who (as Calvin assumed) composed most of the Psalms. Calvin tells us "that in considering the whole course of the life of David, it seemed to me that by his own footsteps he showed me the way, and from this I have experienced no small consolation."[3] We have already seen that Calvin "identifies" to an extent with the Books of Psalms, but this latter quotation stimulates one to speculate whether or not Calvin identified with David *the man.*

Consider the case of a seminarian whose religious faith has been deepened by a study of Karl Barth's views on the Trinity. This seminarian might even say that "Barth has deepened my faith." But by "Barth" in the preceding statement, our seminarian means the *Church Dogmatics,* not Barth the man. In other words, the seminarian identi-

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[1] John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms,* Vol. I trans. by James Anderson (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), p. xxxv. This work will be cited hereafter as *CBP.* When particular Psalms are mentioned, Calvin's pattern of enumeration will be used. This pattern may differ from that used in modern versions of the Psalms. Unfortunately, this 1845 edition of the *CBP* is the most recent English translation.

[2] *Ibid.,* p. xxxvi.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. xliv.

fies with a body of writing and not with a person. Calvin, of course, could be seen as identifying with the Book of Psalms, and his use of the word "David" could be taken as meaning "the Book of Psalms." I argue, however, that Calvin identified with David the man since Calvin's numerous statements about David reveal much psychological involvement with the person of this great Hebrew king. For example, Calvin tells us that as David "was taken from the sheepfold, and elevated to the rank of supreme authority; so God having taken me from my originally obscure and humble condition, has reckoned me worthy of being invested with the honourable office of a preacher and minister of the gospel."[4]

The major thesis of this paper is, therefore, that Calvin identified with David the man. Consequently, I maintain that all of Calvin's statements about David will be colored by Calvin's "ego involvement" with the Hebrew king. This identification should be noted even when Calvin considers David a general example for all Christians. In his sermons and commentaries, Calvin of course claims that in addition to David, other "great men of faith"—such as Moses and Daniel—should serve as "examples" for the faithful. But Calvin lacks ego involvement with these other fortresses of belief; therefore, his use of David as an example for all men shows (1) Calvin's ego involvement and *total* identification with David and (2) his *projection on others* of his needs and the value he has received from his identification with David. In other words, Calvin can and does say that any great man of faith should be an example for the various needs of all Christians, but when Calvin says David is an example for all, Calvin is really saying, "I have found strength from David's example. He has met my needs. Since your needs and problems are all like mine, you too will find strength from David." Thus, when Calvin uses David as an example for all believers, Calvin disregards the multiplicity of needs among various Christians and "unconsciously" assumes that all believers share his particular needs. (Both these points are more fully discussed in section II below.)

I. HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF CALVIN'S IDENTIFICATION WITH DAVID

A. David the Calm Man of Faith

How does Calvin view this man with whom he identifies? First, Calvin feels that David is a "type" of Christ. David represents Christ and His Church because "God exhibited in the person of David a type of the kingdom of Christ. . . ."[5] David, like Christ, was "rejected and persecuted."[6] Moreover, David represents his whole kingdom. Calamities that happen to him also happen to all his subjects.[7]

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. xl.

Calvin also sees David as a very religious man, as one who gives thanks to God (as only "one in a hundred"[8] do) for the gift of the divine law. "David preferred to all the enjoyments, riches, pleasures, and honours of this world, the opportunity of access to the sanctuary."[9] But even when he is away from the sanctuary (e.g., when he was in exile because of Saul), David seeks God's help.[10] Moreover, David gives us an example of proper prayer since he was a man, "who, free from all inordinate passion, breathed forth his prayers under the influence of the Holy Spirit."[11] David prays even in times of great distress, petitioning God with "assiduity and vehemency."[12]

Calvin also felt David was a man who received his strength and power from God. David "was of small stature, and despised among his brethren," but God endued him with strength.[13] David's victories came from God, who "stretched forth his hand in a miraculous manner, and above the common and usual way."[14] But Calvin believed that David was an example of a person who depends on God in times of both happiness and sorrow, for David can say (Ps. 56:8), "Thou hast taken account of my wandering: put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy register?"[15] David, too, could "bear the cross."

David's demeanor was especially attractive to Calvin. The Hebrew king was a somewhat reserved person. "He possessed his soul in patience" and trusted in God—even when his enemies afflicted him, and he was "not driven by restlessness," as are "worldly" men.[16] But David was no wallflower. He knew that excess timidity is wrong when one faces the enemies of God.[17] David "with holy calmness and spiritual wisdom, doom[ed] the reprobate and castaway to destruction,"[18] and he "rejoiced in the destruction of the wicked from the purest and most upright motives"[19] because "the vengeance which he desired to see was such as is properly suitable to God."[20] Indeed, David could both desire and execute such vengeance because he represented the person of Christ."[21] In other words, David properly executed his office and followed his calling. However, Calvin differs from David in that the former did not represent the person of Christ. Calvin, of course, realized this fact.

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[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 47 and 207.

[6] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 69 and 447.

[7] See *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 398.

[8] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 40-1.

[9] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 128-9.

[10] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 136-7.

[11] *Ibid.*, Vol. iv, p. 276.

[12] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 338.

[13] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 432.

[14] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 111-2.

[15] See *ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 352ff.

[16] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 440. Calvin bases these remarks on Ps. 26:20-1, ". . . for I have waited upon thee."

[17] See *ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 434ff.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 285.

Calvin was not only attracted by David's demeanor, but he also saw David's features in his own personality. Speaking of his reaction to some of his enemies in Geneva, Calvin says that he is "naturally of a timid, soft, and pusillanimous disposition. . . ."[22] In other words, David reinforced Calvin's own ego. In fact, Calvin used David's personality as a springboard for exhortations. Commenting on Psalm 119, Calvin says, "I have already repeatedly warned you, in other places, that our zeal is forward and disordered whenever its moving principle is a sense of our own personal injuries."[23] Only when we fight God's enemies can we be zealous, but even in our zeal we must be in a "calm and composed state of mind," not giving "too loose reins to our desires."[24] In summary, our zeal for righteousness should be like the "pure and well-regulated" zeal of David—a zeal that "was so tempered that it ought to have softened even the hardness of steel."[25]

B. *David the Comforter*

In times of persecution, Calvin found comfort in the person of David. As the "chief-builders" of the church perverted true worship in David's time, so did the "Pope and his filthy clergy" in Calvin's time.[26] Calvin admits that the unpleasant experiences of David "greatly aided me in understanding more fully the complaints made by him of the internal afflictions which the Church had to sustain through those who gave themselves out to be her members, that I had suffered the same or similar things from the domestic enemies of the Church."[27] David, moreover, is a source of strength to Calvin in the latter's attacks on his sixteenth-century religious enemies. Calvin tells us that "it remains for us to learn from David's example, whenever the earth is fraught and defiled with wickedness to such a degree that the

[19] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 31.

[20] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 464.

[21] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 122-3.

[22] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. xliii.

[23] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 6.

[24] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 124.

[25] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 57.

[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 392-4.

[27] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. xxxix-xl.

fear of him [God] has become almost extinct, to call upon him to show himself the maintainer of his glory."[28]

David gave Calvin much ammunition to use against enemies of The Truth. For example, even the most ignorant person should know that David speaks against the Catholic practice of Auricular Confession and that no one, therefore, can confess all his sins as required once a year by decree of the Lateran Council.[29] The "blinded Papist" tries to confess all his sins, but the saints "with one voice unite with David in saying, 'who can understand his errors?' "[30] Also, Catholics teach that baptism removes original sin, but "the language of David sounds very differently from that of the Papists. 'I was formed in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' "[31] Sin must cover all parts of our existence.

David also had the foresight to condemn Catholic teaching on works of merit and expiations when he says (Ps. 32:1-2), "Blessed are they whose iniquity is forgiven. . . ." According to Calvin, "David applies these words to complete forgiveness. The distinction, therefore, which the Papists here make between the remission of the punishment and of the fault, by which they make only half a pardon, is not at all to the purpose."[32] Indeed, David attacks crucial doctrines of Catholicism: the "Popish mass" and priests who "assume the prerogative of effecting a reconciliation between God and men."[33] Thus, since David was disturbed by pagan religions, we must have "great anguish of spirit" for the Church of Rome.[34]

Calvin was also inspired by David to attack the Anabaptist view that a church should be composed of sinless members. David said that "I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God" (Ps. 52:8), and this statement, according to Calvin, proves that both "genuine children of God" and "hypocrites" are to be found together in the Church.[35] Certainly, the shrewd David refutes "those fanatics who bewitch both themselves and others with a vain opinion of their having attained to perfect righteousness, so that they no longer stand in need of pardon."[36] Even though David hated the ungodly, he did not withdraw from worship because of any fear of "pollution" from sinners who were also present in the worship services.[37]

[28] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 6.

[29] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 329-30.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 330.

[31] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 291.

[32] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 525.

[33] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 304ff.

[34] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 60.

[35] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 316ff.

[36] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 136.

[37] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 442.

Calvin's identification with David can be seen especially clearly in the former's conflicts with the heretical Servetus. For example, David includes mention of the truth of God's promises in his prayers (Ps. 71:22). "So . . . revolting then, is the folly of that diabolical man, Servetus, who teaches that the role of praying is perverted, if faith is fixed upon the promises, as if we could have any access into the presence of God, until he first invited us by his own voice to come to him."[38] Moreover, when David says that "God is my portion" (Ps. 73:26), he means that God's everlasting love is a source of strength to him. Some, however, "foolishly assert that God is called our *portion*, because our soul is taken from him. I know not how such a silly conceit has found its way into their brains; for it is as far from David's meaning as heaven is from the earth, and it involves in it the wild notion . . . with which Servetus was bewitched."[39]

C. *David the Sinner*

So far, we have seen that Calvin identifies with David the religious man—with David the man of true faith, the man who is dependent upon God. But any student of the Old Testament knows that David had his "faithless" moments. Indeed, David reached his spiritual nadir in his adultery with Bathsheba.[40] How does Calvin react to this sinful incident? In other words, how does the man who finds "ego strength" in identifying with David respond to the Hebrew king's lowest moment?

Calvin's attitude toward the Bathsheba incident is reflected in his *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* and in his sermons on II Samuel. In a sermon on II Sam. 11, Calvin begins with the remarks that "here is a story which should make our hair stand up on our heads."[41] Since such evil fell upon the godly David, Calvin wonders what will be the case with us. The answer is that we can only pray that God will not lead us into temptation. God, however, forgave David for this sin, and such forgiveness shows He will also forgive us.[42] Thus, David is seen by Calvin as a prototype of the religious man, who, although he sins, never totally falls away from God. Although David shows that sinful Christians can be restored, however, Calvin warns us that "due care must indeed be taken lest, by too great forbearance, loose reins should be given to men to commit iniquity."[43] Indeed, David's planning to kill Uriah is to Calvin an example for us not to let things "run wild" when we have begun to commit evil.[44]

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[38] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 98.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 156. The italics are those of the author.

[40] See II Samuel, chapters 11 and 12.

[41] John Calvin, *Predigten über das 2. Buch Samuelis*, ed. by Hanns Rückert (Vol. I, *Supplementa Calviniana*; Ansbach: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), p. 278. This work will be cited hereafter as *Predigten*.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 279.

In his sermons on the Bathsheba incident, Calvin does not hesitate to denounce David. Regarding David's inquiry about Bathsheba (II Sam. 11:3), Calvin says that David was nourishing evil lust. Instead of inquiring about the name of the woman, David should have "backed down and prayed to God."[45] Also, regarding David's role in the murder of Uriah (II Sam. 11:15ff), Calvin says that David behaved "like a man without reason" or "a drop of humanity."[46]

As we know, of course, David repented of his sin in the Bathsheba incident after an encounter with Nathan. David's rage against the sinful man in Nathan's story shows that David still had left a "particle of the fear of God."[47] Yes, in this rage we see that David's faith is still present although it is "like a fire smouldering under the ashes."[48] In the encounter with Nathan, therefore, David condemns himself, saying finally, "I have sinned against the Lord" (II Sam. 12:13). This short confession, however, is all that David says, and Nathan immediately pronounces God's judgment on him. In his sermon, Calvin praises the brevity of David's confession and the latter's willingness to wait for God's judgment. David's confession is "stronger" because of its brevity and subsequent silence; only the hypocrites make their confessions in "such a way that no one can add a word afterwards."[49] Finally, David is an example or model of the "proper manner" to seek reconciliation with God,[50] in that (1) before Nathan came to him, David agonized over his sins (Ps. 51)—he did not merely confess them[51] and (2) David's brief confession, followed by silence, gave freedom to the prophet and God as well to condemn him as much as was needed and caused him to be open to receive "embarrassment and shame."[52] We see, therefore, that Calvin does not gloss over David's sin but uses David's repentance as a model for all. For a moment, David is a tarnished example, but still an example.

[43] Calvin, *CBP*, Vol. III, pp. 440-1.

[44] Calvin, *Predigten*, p. 294.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 283.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 305.

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 321.

[50] Calvin, *CBP*, Vol. II, p. 284.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 285.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 321.

D. *Calvin's Total Identification with David*

Calvin totally identified with David. In other words, David was a source of strength to Calvin in all of the latter's major experiences. Calvin himself tells us that

> for although I follow David at a great distance and come far short of equalling him; or rather although in aspiring slowly and with great difficulty to attain to the many virtues in which he excelled, I still feel myself tarnished with the contrary vices; yet if I had any things in common with him, I have no hesitation in comparing myself with him.[53]

Indeed, Calvin says that although his own condition is "much inferior" to David's, he has been given the picture of David "by God as an example for imitation."[54] Moreover, this example is valid for "both the commencement of my [Calvin's] calling, and the continued course of my function."[55] Calvin even felt that David, together with others, was a sort of prototype of the Man of Sorrows. Yes, "we are just called to engage in the same conflicts with which David and the other holy patriarchs were exercised."[56] There are no new conflicts under the sun.

Calvin even retained his identification with David to his deathbed. Calvin prayed on his deathbed, but he was often unable to talk coherently or sometimes to talk at all. After such periods of silence, according to Beza, Calvin often groaned like David, " 'I was silent, O Lord, because thou didst it.' "[57] Also, Calvin reflected his Davidic identification when he assured the senate of Geneva at his bedside in 1564, "Remember how David declared, that he had fallen when he was in the enjoyment of profound peace, and assuredly would never have risen again, had not God in his singular goodness, stretched out his hand to help him."[58] In conclusion, therefore, Calvin for most of his adult life totally identified with David the person.

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[53] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. xi.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[57] Theodore Beza on the "Life of John Calvin" in John Calvin, *Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church*, Vol. I, trans. by Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1958), p. cxxxiii. Quoted in Richard A. Hasler, "The Influence of David and the Psalms upon John Calvin's Life and Thought," *Hartford Quarterly*, VI, No. 2 (Winter, 1965), 15.

[58] Beza, "Life of Calvin," p. cxxix, quoted in Hasler, p. 15.

II. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF CALVIN'S IDENTIFICATION WITH DAVID

A. Historical Excursus

The study of Calvin from a psychological point of view was begun nearly fifty years ago by Ernst Kretschmer. This German physician and psychologist sought to classify a person psychologically by observing the person's physique and then subsuming that person under one of three body types. In other words, Kretschmer argued that one's psychological nature was determined by one's physique. Calvin was placed by Kretschmer in the "schizothymic" body category and was described as schizoid. Thus, Kretschmer tells us that Calvin's personality exhibits the schizoid traits of idealism, fanaticism, despotism, distrust, pedantry, and timidity.[59] Also, Kretschmer includes in his book a portrait of Calvin, with the comments, "Calvin's face is of an extreme schizothymic form, as one may easily see from the historical portraits of him—haggard, very long face, abnormal length of the middle-face, long sharp nose, and, in many pictures, a hypoplastic under-jaw."[60]

Unfortunately, Kretschmer's analysis of Calvin could hardly be called objective and detached. After a vituperative denouncement of Calvinism, Kretschmer says that "it is less well known that in four years Calvin condemned more than 50 people to death, and banished a still larger number, mostly on theological grounds."[61]

Needless to say, Kretschmer's work prompted replies by Calvin scholars. Typical of such responses was the interchange between Professors A. Lang and H. Weber in the *Reformierte Kirchenzeitung.* Lang vehemently denounces Kretschmer and accuses him of substituting slander (such as seen in the account of Calvin's condemning fifty persons to death) for medical research.[62] Moreover, Lang accuses Kretschmer of using a portrait of Calvin which was painted after the Reformer was exhausted from work and illness.[63] Hermann Weber, on the other hand, defends Kretschmer, stating that Kretschmer and he are not arguing that Calvin was mentally ill; they are merely stating that Calvin had a certain body type but that he (along with other schizoids) could still be considered as mentally healthy.[64] Kretschmer's theory is, of course, an example of causation run wild, and it has been rejected by most historians and psychoanalysts. I would maintain, however, that Calvin did have mild schizoid tendencies, and I will argue below that Calvin's identification with David served as a psychological defense mechanism which enabled Calvin to avoid stronger schizoid tendencies.

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[59] Ernst Kretschmer, *Physique and Character*, 2nd ed. rev., trans. by W.J.H. Sprott (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1925), p. 248.

[60] Ibid.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

[62] A. Lang, "Calvin 'Schizoid'?," *Reformierte Kirchenzeitung*, 81, No. 19 (1931), 147-50. Kretschmer omitted reference to Calvin's condemnations of the more than fifty persons by at least the time of the combined 17th and 18th edition (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1944) of his work.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 147. The portrait appeared in a monograph by Benrath in Werkshagen's, *Der Protestantismus.*

B. *The Schizoid State*

First, I do not use "schizoid" to refer to an extreme form of mental unbalance. By "schizoid" I mean the existence of different conflicting moods or "persons" ("splits") within the ego. Everyone has to some extent, a fractionated ego, and in a sense, therefore, everyone must be regarded as schizoid.[65] I do argue, however, that Calvin manifested schizoid characteristics to a degree greater than that exhibited by most persons.

According to psychoanalytic theory, persons who are "orally fixated" can easily become schizoid.[66] Since "many persons who have lost one of their parents early in childhood show signs of an oral fixation,"[67] and since Calvin lost his mother early in his childhood,[68] it is possible that Calvin would have been susceptible to the schizoid state. However, Calvin's mother may have died too late in his childhood for him to have become orally fixated. Nevertheless, the death of his mother prohibited Calvin from having the same maternal relationships enjoyed by his peers, and this latter fact may be the cause of Calvin's mild schizoid tendencies.

Indeed, the schizoid state can arise as a reaction to past, unpleasant events. According to Guntrip, the schizoid state is one of the fundamental reactions to a "bad-object relationship."[69] A relative who ceases to love a person for example, can become a "bad object" to that person, and the neglected person may fall into a schizoid state.[70] Thus, I assert that Calvin psychologically viewed his deceased mother as a bad object. Hypothetically, Calvin could have said, "I am not as fortunate as other boys because I have no mother to love me. Why did Mother have to die! I really dislike Mother for dying!" Possibly, therefore, Calvin's mother became a "bad object" in his mind, and Calvin fell into a mild schizoid state. Such a state, as we have seen, is not pathological. On the contrary, such a state is a basic reaction to the shock of object loss. However, this state can become pathological since "the fundamental psychopathological problem is: how do people deal with internalized bad objects. . . ."[71]

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[64] Hermann Weber, "Calvin 'Schizoid'?," *Reformierte Kirchenzeitung*, 81, Nu. 28 (1931), 229.

[65] See M. Masud R. Khan, "Clinical Aspects of the Schizoid Personality: Affects and Technique," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, XLI, parts 4-5 (1960), 430.

[66] H. Guntrip, "A Study of Fairbairn's Theory of Schizoid Reactions," in *Psychopathology: A Source Book*, ed. Charles F. Reed, *et al.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), 349ff.

[67] Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1945), p. 394.

[68] François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. by Philip Mairet (London: Collins, 1963), p. 17.

What are the characteristics of the schizoid? In general, schizoids show signs of the beginning of a break with reality.[72] Schizoids have partial delusions and occasional moments of paranoia.[73] Also, the emotions of schizoid persons are inadequate, and "frequently emotions are entirely lacking in situations where they are to be expected."[74] In extreme schizoid types, effective mental activity has retreated into an inner world.[75] Mild schizoids, however, show the healthy tendency to describe these inner struggles. Extreme schizoids show an outward apathy for the external world.[76]

Calvin, as we have seen above, manifests many schizoid characteristics. Consider his exhortations favoring a reserved, calm disposition and his statement that David should have "backed down and prayed to God"[77] as he approached Bathsheba. Also, consider Calvin's stress on David's silence after the latter's confession. All of these statements indicate the tendency to stress the "inner life," a tendency which is highly typical of the schizoid state.

[69] Guntrip in Reed (ed.), p. 349. A "bad object" is an internalized (mental) incorporation or duplication of past, unpleasant relationships with a person or thing (*ibid.*, pp. 347-8).

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 347-8.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 348.

[72] Fenichel, p. 443.

[73] *Ibid.*, pp. 443ff.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 445.

[75] Guntrip in Reed (ed.), p. 344.

[76] *Ibid.*, pp. 344-5.

[77] Calvin, *Predigten*, p. 281. My point is that this statement—and all his statements of an evaluative or hortatory nature—reflects Calvin's own values and views of life. Such statements reflect Calvin's psychological background and provide primary material for an analysis of his character.

Calvin also manifests the schizoid tendency toward moments of paranoia. We are told by Calvin that we must meet the "secret treachery of friends."[78] Obviously reflecting on those friends who betrayed him in Geneva, Calvin tells us that they "are indeed much more to be feared than those who openly declare their wicked intentions."[79]

C. *Identification: A Defense Mechanism*

Calvin's schizoid traits do not dominate his personality. On the contrary, as we have seen, Calvin leans primarily toward identification.

According to one prominent psychological theorist, "identification consists in the inclusion in the ego of an object . . . so that the ego feels that object as part of itself: that object becomes egotized."[80] In Calvin's case, David becomes a part of Calvin and increases Calvin's ego strength. Furthermore, schizoids are especially prone to identify, since extreme schizoids tend to look for and lean on hopefulness in others.[81] I maintain that Calvin's tendency to identification was not due mainly to his mild schizoid nature but that identification was used by Calvin as a mechanism of defense—as a means to avoid retreating completely into an inner world which is out of contact with reality. Indeed, identification is a perfectly "normal" defense mechanism of the ego.[82]

As a defense mechanism, identification performs many valuable functions, but we should especially understand the "externalizing power" of this defense mechanism. In other words, identification stimulates the shifting of one's character from passivity to objectivity and thus helps the person to move out of himself and into the "external" world.[83] Consequently, identification may be especially helpful to those who have mild schizoid traits because this defense mechanism can help them occasionally to overcome splits in the ego and retreats into the "inner" world. When these "splits" occur in the ego (e.g., when two different goals, such as the goal to obey God and the goal to sin conflict), identification can help one to make a decision as to which goal to follow.[84] As we have seen in numerous examples above, Calvin's identification with David often enabled him to choose the path of righteousness.

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[78] Calvin, *CBP*, Vol. II, p. 336. The fact that Calvin could even form friendships shows of course that his schizoid tendencies were somewhat mild.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 118. When Calvin discovered that a friend was really an enemy, he said that "in this manner I may very justly complain with David; 'yea mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me'" (Ps. 41:9). *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. xvii. See also Wendel, *Calvin*, pp. 81-83.

[80] Paul Federn, *Ego Psychology and the Psychoses*, Edoardo Weiss, ed., New York, 1952, p. 15. The object of course can be a person.

[81] Khan, p. 433.

[82] Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, rev. ed., trans. by Cecil Baines (Vol. II, "The Writings of Anna Freud"; New York: International Universities Press, 1966), p. 43.

[83] David E. Schecter, "Identification and Individuation," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, XVI, No. 1 (January, 1968), 68.

Although Calvin's identification with David has been noted in this essay, the fact that Calvin was prone to extensive identification must be stressed. For example, Calvin manifested what Anna Freud calls "sympathetic identification."[85] Such identification involves "living in the lives of others."[86] In other words, a person who is prone to this type of identification often projects his prohibited instinctual impulses onto others and wants others to enjoy what his severe superego prohibits him from enjoying.[87]

Calvin's exhibition of sympathetic identification can be seen in an analysis of his letters. When Calvin writes of his standards for a future bride, he tells us that he is "none of those insane lovers who embrace also the vices of those they are in love with, where they are smitten at first sight with a fine figure."[88] His future bride must be "chaste," "patient," and "interested about my health."[89] However, when he is hunting for a bride for his friend Farel, Calvin has a different set of standards: "Indeed, there does not occur to me any young woman who is both beautiful and virtuous, and at the same time possessed of a good dowry."[90] Probably after reflecting for a moment, Calvin goes on to say, however, that "there are two young neighbors of ours of great personal beauty, and liberally educated. . . ."[91] Calvin, therefore, wants his friends to enjoy what his own superego prohibits him from enjoying and he thus exhibits "sympathetic identification."

Calvin's extensive identification was also aided by his view of Satan. Calvin claims that "the best way to overcome Satan is, not to go out of ourselves, but to maintain an internal conflict against the desires of our own hearts."[92] Although this statement reveals the inner struggles common to schizoids, it also reveals the fact that the Devil (in Calvin's view) was not a "projection" of Evil onto the form of a person. In the final analysis, at any rate, Calvin did not blame the Devil for the sins of man. On the contrary, Calvin says that "whatever sins men may commit are chargeable entirely upon themselves."[93] In his sermons on II Samuel, Calvin tells us that *our* misdeeds accuse us: "we ourselves make our passion our judgment."[94] Additionally, however, Calvin's statement on the best way to overcome Satan reveals what is known as "identification with the aggressor."[95] Such identification obtains when a person exhibits especially bellicose behavior without realizing the nature or person of his enemy.[96] For example, a child who beats himself may really be beating his father whom he regards as his enemy. The child has identified with his father, the aggressor. Thus, I would argue that Calvin identified with Satan when the former maintained his inner struggle against the desires of his heart. These internal struggles were Calvin's way of fighting the aggressive Satan.

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[84] *Ibid.*, pp. 54ff.

[85] Freud, pp. 123ff.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] John Calvin, *Letters of John Calvin*, Vol. I, ed. by Jules Bonnet, trans. by David Constable (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Co., 1855), p. 117.

[89] *Ibid.*

[90] John Calvin, *Letters*, Vol. III, trans. by Marcus Robert Gilchrist (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1858), p. 427.

[91] *Ibid.*

By this point, one may have wondered why Calvin chose to identify with David rather than with God or Christ, the chief Example for all Christians. To a small degree Calvin did identify with Christ and, thus, indirectly, with God. For example, Calvin says that "no man, however, can with sincerity of heart, surrender himself entirely into the hand of God, except he has first formed the resolution of treating with contempt the reproaches of the world, and is also fully persuaded that he has God as the defender of his cause."[97] In other words, the true Christian must identify with God. Christ, of course, makes it possible for us to identify with God. But Christ is both human and divine; he is *more* than human, and it is therefore difficult to identify with such a "person." David, however, was fully human: he was basically a religious man of great faith, but like all humans, he occasionally fell into sin. I argue that Calvin chose to identify completely with David, rather than with Christ, because David was a real man, but not more than a man. As I have intimated above, David is seen by Calvin as a kind of prototype of the complete man—man as religious and faithful, man as a sinner, and man as a penitent sinner.

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[92] Calvin, *CBP*, Vol. II, p. 134.

[93] *Ibid.*, p. 289.

[94] Calvin, *Predigten*, p. 287.

[95] See Freud, pp. 109ff.

[96] *Ibid.*

[97] Calvin, *CBP*, Vol. IV, p. 270.

In summary, I have attempted to argue in this section that although Calvin was mildly schizoid, he used extensive identification—especially the identification with David—as a defense mechanism to avoid the extremely schizoid emphasis on, and retreat to, the inward life. Even though he occasionally made David into an evangelist for the gospel of the inner life, Calvin basically found strength from David to move into the external world. Finally, since advanced schizoids generally suffer from decomposition of their defense mechanisms,[98] the very fact that Calvin was able to form any identifications demonstrates that his schizoid characteristics were usually overcome.

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[98] Samuel B. Kutash, "Ambulatory (Borderline) Schizophrenia: Psycho-Diagnostics and Implications from Psychological Data," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, XXVII, No. 4 (October, 1957), 670-1.

AN ESSAY ON LUTHER AND JUSTIFICATION AND THE LAW

BY JEFFREY C. EATON

IN THE sixteenth century it was customary to think in terms of confession and penance, and to understand human existence in terms of guilt before God and divine forgiveness. The church of this period contrasted life and death by conceiving of death as an experience of God's judgment, not coming in a single instant but drawing near in everything that diminishes a man's vitality. Luther correctly perceived the juncture between death seen in this way, and life under the Law, and viewed both of these as instruments of God which bring God's judgment upon humanity which has separated itself from him. For Luther man was seeking idols whenever he turned from that which is the author of life, God, to that which causes death, the world and the security one procures by one's own hand from creation itself. Since all men fall into sin, i.e., since all men prefer to seek out their own existence in creation rather than placing their trust in the Creator, man must be justified before God if he is to come to life and to reject death in his own existence. Luther himself realized the necessity of the justification of man before God, and he realized that legalism as it manifested itself in the Mosaic law, and as it impinged upon every aspect of man's existence, was the mentality which sought security apart from God and believed in its own power to appropriate righteousness for itself. Luther saw justification as the pivotal doctrine around which the Christian faith has grown, and this doctrine became the very heart of the Lutheran reformation.

The following will deal with the disparities, paradoxes, and conflicts between justification by faith alone through God's grace, and justification through the Law as understood and explicated by Luther. This will be followed by an attempt to reinterpret hermeneutically this understanding in the light of twentieth-century existential theology, in the belief that this is the logical outgrowth and legitimate representation of Luther's conception of justification.

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I. JUSTIFICATION IN LUTHER'S THEOLOGY

Luther has said that the true way of justification is to turn away from the Law,[1] i.e. to turn away from the mind-set that believes a man can justify himself if he obeys all the tenets of the Law; i.e. by this obedience God will be obliged to justify him. However, it is not by the pious practice of the Law that man is forgiven of sin and made righteous in God's sight. There is no Law that can claim justification for its own, because justification is available to men only through the grace of God.

In the doctrine of justification are located all the other doctrines of Christianity. When it is taught that men are justified by Christ, Christ is proclaimed God in his nature, and this, of course, is the fundamental presupposition of Christianity. Christ alone justifies in the sense that man's sin and death which are inherent in his nature, are appropriated by Christ and abolished in his person by his victory over death. Luther saw the union of man with the person of Christ as imputing to man the grace, peace, righteousness, glory, and life of Christ who at the same time accepts the burden of man's sins. It is by this exchange of righteousness for sin that man is made just, but this justification is not the product of any merit which man might believe himself to possess. Instead it is a gift of God, the result of his gracious love for man, and all that man need do to obtain this is to recognize in faith the Christ-event as the free justifying act of God.

Luther maintained, however, that if man divides Christ's person from himself by refusing to recognize God's gracious act alone as being capable of justifying him, he places himself under the Law and seeks to effect justification by his own power and merit. Luther believed that the most difficult thing for a man to do was to distinguish correctly between the Gospel and the Law, but that the proper distinction was imperative if man hoped to be justified in God's sight.[2] For Luther the words of the Gospel which state that Christ loved man and gave himself for man are the words which abrogate the righteousness of the Law and are the true meaning of justification. When one places his faith in God in the person of Christ, he is made righteous because he has attributed everything to God. Justification accomplishes for man the remission of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to man, God regarding everything done by Christ as if it were done by man. Thus, the gracious act of God in Christ removes the sin of the faithful and replaces it with the righteousness of Christ. Luther believed that this salvation was awarded without reservation by God in the Christ event to all who accepted the reality of that event in faith.

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[1] Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*. St. Louis, 1963, vol. I, p. 57.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 365.

Luther's doctrine of justification intends to praise the miracle of God's love and base all human confidence on it alone.[3] For Luther justification occurred *sola fide* as is evidenced in his translation of Romans 3:28. Such a translation guarantees a comprehension of the justifying event as God's pure act of love, and to such an act there is no response but faith in the reality of that act. No work of man, not even a work of love, can justify man. Instead man must give himself over to God's grace in response to God's act, *sese subiicere iustificatione et ita recipere eius effectum*. For Luther it was by the righteousness of Christ alone that man is justified to eternal life, and if this is not recognized in the doctrine of justification Luther believed that Christ's role as Propitiator has been taken from him, i.e., the God who justifies is none other than Jesus Christ.

The righteousness of God is that righteousness by which man is made righteous (justified) by him, and according to Luther, this happens solely through faith in the Gospel. This righteousness precedes works and works result from it. God's righteousness is mediated to man in the event of Jesus Christ, an event of unmitigated grace gratuitously extended by God, and that man's only legitimate response to such grace is: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, that thou mayest be justified."[4] The implication of this is that man as a sinner justifies God, and Luther recognized that this did occur extrinsically. He understood that God was justified in three ways: God is justified when he punishes man's unrighteousness; God is justified by the contrast of his glory with the spiritual poverty of men in sin; God is justified when he justifies the godless and infuses his grace into those who believe that he is righteous in his word. In these three ways Luther observed that God is extrinsically justified in the existence of man. It is the second and third ways which are of the most importance to the Christian, for it is by these that man comes to recognition of his sinfulness, the acknowledgement of which causes him to yearn for the righteousness of God. Thus, a man's cognizance of his sinfulness brings him to surrender to God in faith, and ultimately God justifies man and makes man similar to himself.[5] Those who do not believe in God's justifying power or who believe themselves worthy by their own merits do not allow God to be justified in them and thus deny God his rightful glory. Nevertheless, intrinsically God is just and true. God's word is justified in itself, but can only become so in man when man confesses his sinfulness and responds to God in faith. The passive justification of God by man is the active justification of man by God, i.e., God justifies by his word when he makes man what his word is, and his word is righteous. Active and passive justification occur at once, i.e., man justifies God's word when he accepts it as righteous.

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[3] Wilhelm Dantine, *Justification of the Ungodly*. St. Louis, 1968, *passim*.

[4] Psalms 51:4.

Luther's conception of justification by faith, in opposition to the Catholic doctrine of penance, was bound up with his understanding of the value of the Church for the individual believer, and it refuted the legalism inherent in the Catholic Church's conception of penance. In penance the priest holds the penitent to *contritio* which are the terrors of the Law. The doctrine of justification for Luther brought the issue of justification to the individual as he stood naked before God, and it weakened the link between the doctrine itself and its direct reference to life within the Church. In so doing Luther reiterated the fact that justification can only be imputed by God to those who respond to God's call in faith. As a consequence, he demonstrated that the Church cannot impute righteousness but can only bear the Word to men that they, individually, might respond to God's act of grace in Christ.

In Luther's theology justification is God's forgiveness; it is a reconciliation with him; it is an adoption into the position of his children, and in God's revelation in Christ of his grace, it operates as the imputation of Christ's righteousness in such a way that the position given to and maintained by him is imputed to the sinners who belong to the community of Christ by faith. Consistently Luther put forth the article of justification as that article on which the Church either stands or falls. "Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised, even if heaven and earth and things temporal be destroyed."[6] Justification is truly the core of the Christian faith, and it is the very *raison d'être* of the Christ event, and the hope of every Christian. It is the very actualization of God's grace in the life of man. In Tillich's words, it is the event where the "unacceptable is accepted"[7] and so facilitates a relationship between the righteous God and man made righteous by God.

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[5] Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans*. Philadelphia, 1961, p. 72.

[6] Martin Luther, preface to a doctoral dispute of Palladius and Tileman, Dantine, *ibid.*, p. 13.

II. THE LAW IN LUTHER'S THEOLOGY

The Law is not necessary in order for man to be justified, although if used correctly it can serve a purpose in the justifying activity of God. It is the Law (or to think more expansively legalism) which men have most often chosen to usurp the power which faith has for justification. From Paul to Luther, it was legalism which men employed to obtain justification and which has been symptomatic of the sinful nature of man's condition. The very fact that man so easily mistakes the Law for the Gospel is indicative of how deeply the security-seeking of legalism is rooted in the psyches of men. Paul continually battled to prove that sin is not forgiven by the pious practice of the Law no matter how it manifests itself in the lives of men.

The legitimate function of the Law is to proclaim man a sinner for whom it is impossible to perform good works. Thus the Law, after manifesting the presence of sin in man, has the capacity to terrify and humble man and finally to prepare him for justification by driving him to Christ. This was the theological function of the Law in Luther's theology. Luther clearly reiterated the Pauline stance that man could not be justified by deeds of the Law whether they preceded or followed justification. Through the Law man can only be condemned and killed: Through Christ man is preserved to life. The Law terrifies and drives man away from God; Christ reconciles man to God. Luther believed that the entire Law was abrogated by the grace of God evidenced in the Christ event, and it therefore had no power to justify by itself. He did believe that even when one was in Christ he could still be tormented by his own sinfulness under the Law, but that he also had the knowledge of faith that he was in fellowship with God.

For Luther whatever was not the Holy Spirit or hearing by faith was the Law, and Law was to be understood as the whole Law, the whole legalist mentality which attempts to wrest justification from God by the force of a righteousness of its own. All men know the righteousness of the Law in some measure either by natural or by divine revelation, and there is no group which is exclusively prone to the legalist mentality and the practices and confidence in the Law which it engenders. The Law which Luther refers to most often is the whole of the Mosaic Law. This Law neither rests upon love nor does it believe, and whether it is done morally or theologically, it contributes nothing to justification outside the Gospel.

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[7] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*. New Haven, 1956, p. 164.

The promise given by God to Abraham and fulfilled in Christ (who for Luther was the Offspring of Abraham) is above and before (430 years) the Law. The promise to Abraham called for the same response as does the Christ event, i.e., that man respond in faith, believing as did Abraham in the grace of God and the faithfulness of his promise. The promise is superior to the Law and the Law cannot abrogate the promise. In Romans Paul defends the doctrine of Christian righteousness on the very basis of the promise to Abraham.[8] The Law rather than justifying has the opposite effect and consigns man under a curse of death. It is fallacious to assume that if the Law does not justify, it is nothing since the Law was added because of transgressions. The Law does have its proper station. The Law was added beyond and after the promises until the Offspring would come who would fulfill the promises. Luther perceived a double use of the Law: a civil use of the Law to restrain transgressions and a theological use of the Law which increases awareness of transgressions in the conscience in order to make man conscious of his sinfulness and to bring him to repentance. Luther admitted that the Law does contribute to justification in its correct use, because it impels man to the promise of grace. It is therefore through the Gospel that the Law aids in justification.

Another Law about which Luther speaks is the law of love which is written on the hearts of men. This is the law of faith and law of Christ, and it is the fulfillment of the Law of Moses. The Law of faith is accomplished by faith and was given in order that grace might be sought, grace being extended by God to fulfill the Law. Love is the fulfillment of the Law and the end of the commandments, and the Gospel indicates that this grace and love is located in Christ. For Luther God's offer of grace to man was the supreme act of grace, for God realized that man could not fulfill the Law, and that only by his mercy could man ever be made just before him.

When the Law came to life, sin began to appear. The Law could not condemn and take away sin, but instead Luther saw it as an agent that increased sin by virtue of its location in the flesh. He did believe that it could be made effectual, however, if it was performed in the spirit of faith. As long as the Law is without faith to fulfill it, it convicts all men of sin and turns God's promise into a threat.[9] Sin was made manifest by the Law but was not taken away by it. Something else was needed to remove the sin which was brought to man's awareness under the Law. That something else for Luther was the love of Christ which he saw as the fulfillment of the Law of Moses. Luther believed that when the Law is put to its best use, it is unable to do anything but increase guilt and consciousness of sin, and man under the power of the Law is a man who has become a slave to the world. Although the Law does say that man should love the Lord, it is unable to provide the means for that love. Only faith can actuate this love and ultimately provide for man's justification. Apart from justification Luther believed that man should think reverently of the Law, but he maintained that the Law and Christ were mutually contradictory entities.[10] Perhaps Luther's best description of man's existence under the Law, is the one which summarizes his rhetorical delineation of active, passive, and neutral functions of the Law (actively the Law makes a man weak; passively it cannot justify; and neutrally it is in itself weakness and poverty which can only trouble man): "Trying to be justified through the Law, therefore, is as though someone who is already weak and sick were to ask for even greater trouble that would kill him completely, but meanwhile were to say that he intends to cure his disease by that very means."[11]

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[8] Luther, *Romans*, p. 303.

III. FAITH: THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION AND THE END OF LEGALISM

Luther's intent in his explication of the doctrine of justification is to bring about the realization that it is through faith alone, not by works of the Law, that man is justified, and that this faith must be located in God's gracious and redeeming act in Jesus Christ. The works of the Law are holy, righteous, and good but they cannot justify a man. Luther believed that faith justified man in God's sight because of its capacity to take hold and to possess the treasure of Christ, and neither Christ nor faith is the Law or a work of the Law. Luther's opponents argued that faith justifies only when love and good works are added, but Luther contended that it is by God's grace alone that man is justified. He emphasized that neither can man be justified by his particular station in life or by social position, for these are simply the "masks" or instruments by which God governs the world and not means of justification. If it is the Law that is necessary for justification, the Law is made Christ, for what belongs to Christ in the Gospel has been attributed to the Law. However, Luther points out that this is not the case since it is Christ's work to embrace those pronounced guilty by the Law and make those who place their faith in him just. "For Christ is the end of the Law that everyone who has faith in him may be justified."[12]

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 148.

[10] Luther, *Galatians*. Vol. I, p. 366.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 403.

It is easy to understand the differences between Law and faith, but it is difficult to apply these differences in life situations. Nevertheless, the two are different in both connotation and denotation, and this manifests itself most clearly in Luther's theology in his understanding of works and the motivation for their performance. Luther was quick to point out that when a man is justified he will not be idle, but like a sound tree will bear good fruit.[13] For Luther faith without works was useless, since faith without works was a false faith. In order for works to be works of faith, however, faith must precede works. Faith is the divinity in the work, and it alone is the reason for justification. Faith alone justifies, but justification can be attributed to works on account of faith. For Luther faith was the absolute necessity for justification, and the theological man was the man of faith.

Apart from the issue of justification Luther did not believe that anyone could adequately praise good works if they were done by a willing and pure heart. Faith justifies without the works of the Law, but the works of faith are the necessary corollary to man's response to Christ in faith. Deeds done in the spirit of liberty (not done in fear of punishment or for reward) and love of God are the works of faith. It is grace that is the fulfillment of the Law not works, and the object of works must be the longing for God's grace which is in Christ. The works themselves cannot make a man righteous, but when joined to a faith in the grace of God, they become deeds of righteousness. Works that precede justification prepare for it, and those that follow justification presuppose that the performer of the works has already been justified in God's sight. Deeds are, therefore, righteous when they are made so by God's grace. Works which seek the gracious justification of God are not works of the Law but of faith, because they spring from man's desire to be justified not by his own claim to righteousness on the basis of works. The works of the Law cannot fulfill the Law which in itself is a spiritual entity given by God. Instead the Law must be obeyed inwardly. God accepts the work on account of the person, not the person on account of the work. It is not the works, therefore, that Luther deplores but the foolish estimation of their function and worth which places them above faith and makes them efficacious by their own merits to procure God's justification.

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[12] Romans 10:4.

[13] Luther, *ibid.*, p. 155 (reference to Matt. 7:17).

"The effect of faith is justification; by which it is to be understood as that act of God by which he removes the sentence of condemnation, to which man is exposed in consequence of his sins, releases him from his guilt, and ascribes to him the merit of Christ. . . ."[14] This act occurs the instant the merit of Christ is appropriated by faith. It is a forensic or judicial act, since in it God pronounces a judgment on man who is now seen as acceptable and righteous before God. Luther points out that it is not membership in the Israelite community or the monk's cowl which has the power to justify man, but such can only come from God, and man can only receive it for his own in faith. And yet, this faith in itself gives nothing. Faith is only the hand which reaches out and accepts what God offers as a free gift. Faith is not an accomplishment with its own merit, but it is a response to God's act of mercy in the cross of Christ. (Luther would say that faith itself is a pure gift of God, not a decision of man, since man is foreordained by God as righteous or unrighteous.) Luther realized that the real danger to faith was not from the Law alone or from human reason which attempts to rationalize God's grace, thereby obviating faith as the only approach to God (although both are threatening individually to the cause of faith), but from the conspiracy of the two. The combination of *lex* and *ratio* is the one which bodes ill for faith. The Law becomes the object of reason as Christ becomes the object of faith when Law and reason are wed. Reason, Luther believed, knew nothing but the Law and the ways of the Law, and no matter what its intentions, it would always lapse into thinking about the Law. Reason is incorrect thinking about God as faith is correct thinking, and Luther's condemnation of reason and the Law is grounded in their mutual and fundamental misunderstanding of God.

In scripture those who think that they are holy are reproached for their security with themselves. These are people who have only dealt with their external sin. It is the seeking of security in one's self which is indicative of those who believe that they can be justified by the Law, and it is this attitude which engenders the wrong use of the Law. Man's plight in the world is not one of security but of tension because he exists in sin. Since this is so he can do nothing but remain in his sins and trust in the mercy of God to make him righteous. Luther believed that the fact that man is a sinner does not harm him as long as he seeks with all his strength to be justified by God in the realization that he as sinful man can do nothing for himself but beg righteousness through Christ, in faith that he will be forgiven. To illustrate man's condition in the world before God, Luther employed Aristotle's five stages of growth: the first was "not being," i.e. man entrenched in sin; the second was "becoming," i.e. man justified by God; the third was "being," i.e. man in a state of righteousness; the fourth was "acting," i.e. man acting and living righteously; and the fifth was "being acted upon," i.e. man being made perfect and complete. Luther believed that only the first three categories could be applied to man's existence in the world, and that the last two were divine categories.[15]

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[14] Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Philadelphia, 1899, pp. 424-5.

Luther viewed Christ as the revelation of God's grace to man in which man must believe in order to be justified. He felt that for man to attempt to make himself just in God's sight was a futile endeavor, and that this futility was manifested in the Law itself. To think that he can do anything to achieve righteousness is for man to overstate his own glory and to minimize God's, and is completely contrary to scripture (both Old and New Testaments). Luther correctly saw the continuity between the promise of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of that promise in the Christ event, and in so doing he established justification by faith alone as the doctrine consistent with God's word as it is revealed in the Bible. The line which connects Paul and Luther was never clearer than on this issue of justification, and certainly the conception of the doctrine by these two men makes the Christ event not only intelligible to man but also integral for man's understanding of himself before God.

IV. JUSTIFICATION TODAY

For Luther himself the issue of justification was elusive, i.e., it *per se* was firm, but it was difficult to realize in personal existence. He believed that when men heard Christ's word and placed their faith in it, it became a present reality for them and had the power to justify and save them. However, he also realized that man's nature constantly deceives him into thinking that he can live out of himself, and this is why man has consistently retreated to the womb of legalism. But Christ was not a lawgiver and judge. He was the servant of the Law who became the redeemer from the Law. The teaching and keeping of the Law by Christ were accidental functions of his ministry, and this must be remembered if the justifying event of God's grace in Christ is to be kept separate from confusion with the Law and if the Christ event is to be authenticating for man's existence.

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[15] Luther, *Romans*, p. 322.

The modern theologians who have been most in accord with the Pauline-Lutheran conception of justification have been the existentialist theologians, most of whom have been strongly influenced by the theology of Rudolf Bultmann. It is only to be expected that so many Bultmannian theologians are Lutheran, since their understanding of theology in general and the Christ event specifically have grown out of the Pauline understanding as transmitted through the theology of Luther. These theologians have recognized that men today are no less in need of justification and emancipation from the oppression of the Law than men were in Luther's day, and that the message of God's grace presented in the Christ event must be re-presented so that it may gain new importance for man's personal existence.

Man's existence outside of faith is characterized by inauthenticity. It is an existence which seeks security in itself, one which attempts to live out of itself, and denies the glory of God as Creator. This inauthentic existence attributes to creation that which belongs to God. The kerygma summons man to a radical dependence upon the grace of God in freedom from the past which is the ever-present manifestation of man's legalistic propensities, so that man might realize his original possibility for existence *coram deo*. This is the same summons that Luther found in the kerygma, although his categories have been subsumed by the categories of existential philosophy in an effort to make the Christ event meaningful to modern man in his own particular *Sitz im Leben*. Man under the Law binds himself into slavery to guilt and death about which he can do nothing. Under the Law the Now is rooted in the past (*Geschichte* becomes *Historie*) rather than open to the possibility of the future. In this way man's whole being is oriented toward sin and the ultimate reality of sin which is death (sin being that which diminishes life). So long as man refuses to trust God and seeks instead to find his life in the world, his being becomes pure past, and any future he might think he has is an illusion.

In faith, however, the bondage to the past, which is really bondage to the Law, is broken, because man then looks solely to God for his security, faith having taken the determinative value from those motives which had previously controlled his life. Such an absolute trust in God is nothing less than the surrender of all of one's self-contrived securities and the renunciation of every attempt to obtain and acquire one's life apart from God. This is a life of radical freedom from the world, an intrinsic distance from all worldly attachments. To exist in freedom from the past and in openness to the future is the eschatological existence of the New Testament, and it is the justification after which man strives. The decision for faith is not made once and for all but must be reaffirmed in each concrete situation by a decision for God. This life in faith is authentic existence for which man yearns and which can be received by him only in faith in the grace of God. In order to realize such an understanding of justification and the Law, a thorough demythologization of the kerygma must be undertaken, in order that God's grace can impinge more heavily upon man's existence in a way that is comprehensible to man in the twentieth century. Also such demythologization is necessary in order that man's existence be one of radical self-surrender based on faith in God's grace rather than dependent upon a legalistic understanding of the kerygma which attempts to objectivize God and his workings in history.

"To be truly human means to stand *coram deo* and, because of such standing, to be continually confronted with the gift and demand of authentic existence which is God's justification for man."[16] Paul's conviction, like that of scripture as a whole, is that men are radically responsible to God who has made himself known as the gracious Father and has deprived them of an excuse for their self-willed estrangement from each other and from him. In Christ, justification, which has always been possible on the grounds of God's primordial love, is decisively revealed. The demand for faith in Christ is the transparent means of expressing God's original claim on man's life (this concept is quite possibly extant in Luther's thinking when he refers to the continuity of God's promise and justification by faith in Christ).

The full implications of radical grace have rarely been realized in Christian theology, i.e., that God justifies man purely by grace alone and is not bound by any particular saving works such as have been traditionally associated with the person of Jesus Christ. The event of Jesus must not be a condition apart from which God's grace cannot be extended freely to man, or the event of Jesus itself will become a work of the Law. If this occurs the Christ event as God's decisive act of love loses its authoritative capacity to explicate and amend all other disclosures of that love. The historic calling of Protestantism has been to combat the heresy of works-righteousness in all the forms that it assumes in the life and doctrine of the Church (including the event of Jesus of Nazareth when it becomes an hypothesis apart from which God is no longer allowed to be gracious). Today, as in Luther's time, faith must insist on the freedom and transcendence of God who alone through his grace has the power to justify man if he will respond to God's call to radical obedience in faith. The self-understanding, which is justification, is offered solely through God's grace which is man's possibility in the Christ event. The theology of Luther has been significant for modern theology's understanding of the doctrine of justification in existentialist terminology. Furthermore, it will be increasingly significant as a theological basis upon which the revolutionary can found his struggle against the oppressive and legalist entities which dominate man's societal interactions and which seek to eliminate the possibility of man understanding his existence in terms of radical self-surrender to the grace of God in his life. The situation today, political as well as theological, presents us with the possibility as never before to comprehend the Lutheran Church's central proposition of justification by faith through grace, a proposition which has been an enigma even in the Church in which it evolved.

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[16] Shubert Ogden, *Christ Without Myth*. New York, 1961, p. 140.

SERMON

THE SEMINARIAN AND HIS PIPE

BY ANDREW D. SCRIMGEOUR

> Don't, I beg you, only hear the message, but put it into practice; otherwise you are merely deluding yourselves. The man who simply hears and does nothing about it is like a man catching the reflection of his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, it is true, but he goes on with whatever he was doing without the slightest recollection of what sort of person he saw in the mirror.
>
> But the man who looks closely into the perfect law, the law that makes us free, and who lives in its company, does not forget what he hears, but acts upon it; and that is the man who by acting will find happiness.
>
> If anyone appears to be "religious" but cannot control his tongue, he deceives himself, and we may be sure that his religion is useless. Religion that is pure and genuine in the sight of God the Father will show itself by such things as visiting orphans and widows in their distress and keeping oneself uncontaminated by the world.
>
> James 1:22-27

IF YOU were to choose a symbol that best captured the seminary style of life, what would it be? a briefcase?
a fountain pen?
a semester paper?
a chalice?
a cup of coffee?
I would take my symbol from
out of the briefcase
the classroom
the Commons
the jacket pocket
from
off the desk beside the cup of coffee. I choose the PIPE—that popular furnace of Presbyterian incense.

I am constantly fascinated by the serious and ever-enlarging proces-

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sion of pipers around campus. Just about everybody seems captivated by the ornate bowl and tries it out. I have a weekly precept with twelve juniors led by an amiable, pipe-smoking doctoral candidate. The first three weeks the preceptor smoked his pipe; one student smoked his cigarettes. Now we have *six* happy pipers in the class!

I wish I knew the charm of the pipe for the theologian, for I'm not even exempt from its charisma. My guess is that the pipe has subtle connotations of attained intellectualism,
sophistication,
profound discussion.
The pipe helps us become theologues.
It is pleasant company in the contemplative life.
It is a symbol of the student.

In his entertaining treatise on the pipe, Georges Herment offers this seasoned observation:

> The pipe is friend to the spectator sport. . . . [Under] no circumstances must one walk too quickly when smoking a pipe. . . . [Smoke] in a closed place, where a still atmosphere favors combustion and makes a sort of secondary wall to the bowl of the pipe, retaining the effluences and allowing none of them to be lost. . . . *The bowl becomes the center of the world* [italics mine], the point where the radiating circles of the real and unreal meet.

THE BOWL BECOMES THE CENTER OF THE WORLD—a
world of thought and gentle conversation,
closed off,
cozy,
preoccupied
out of the draft,
out of the stadium,
out of the action.

Am I unfair in saying that this "pipe world" is often apt description of seminary living? I think not.

As seminarians, we love to listen,
we love to read.

We take notes so well.
We love new ideas, fresh approaches.
We grab the new books arrayed at the TBA.

Pipe in hand, we evaluate new information and select our courses with painful care.

We go to chapel when the board outside
suggests a stimulating sermon.

Strangely reminiscent
of the Athenians,
we have an obsession for the novel and the
new. Check out the conversations in the Commons anytime.

We also love to talk. Just observe a junior venture an opinion in our presence. I now draw from Helmut Thielicke. Under the pressure of putting thought into word, because of his excitement and embarrassment, his pulse beats wildly. With a gush of courage he takes pounding heart into his hands and frames words with abandon.

Now the theological pros—pipes in hand—leap to the battle cry. With lances lowered and at a rattling gallop, with lips painfully locked, hardly repressing a howl of triumph, they pounce. The pipe is brandished. The tongue is unleashed. The technical jargon flies around the ears of the uninitiated. Words like

hermeneutical presuppositions,
realized eschatology,
delayed parousia,
corporate solidarity

Wonderful words like
agape
soteriology
reconciliation

Frightened, our novice
runs for cover—one hand protecting his face, and the other raising the white flag. This helpless pose is construed as victory by the middlers and seniors. Another junior has become convinced and enlightened. What in fact has happened has been mere shock treatment—only it was never therapy.

Such is a paradigm of much seminary action. We listen,
read,
talk, and
puff.

It happens here in Speer,
Alexander,
the Princeton-Windsor Apartments, and
at our "field ed" jobs.

Suddenly, from beyond the blue haze an unwelcome voice cries—

BE SURE YOU ACT ON THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE
AND DON'T MERELY LISTEN.
YOU'RE IN DANGER OF DELUDING YOURSELVES!

Unwittingly, we have been victimized by a form of gnostic pride. Truth and love are rarely united in us. We have the theologians cancer.

We are diseased.

Theologicoccus gravis

The pathology can be charted. Truth seduces us easily into a kind of joy of possession. I have comprehended historical doctrine,
learned it,
written a paper on it,
passed a final on it.
This is mastery.
This is power.

I am therefore more than the other student who is ignorant of this particular doctrine. Anyone who deals with truth—as we in seminary certainly do—is easy prey to the psychology of the possessor. We have mental exhilaration, and we want more.

But the Christian style of living is the opposite of the will to
possess,
hoard,
or
flaunt.
It is self-giving.
It acts and does not merely talk.

It doesn't boast.
It is humble.
It shares.
It serves.

It seems so devilish that joy of possession can kill the actions of love. It is demonic because the message we scrutinize is the story of love—a man who cannot be owned or incarcerated,
a man who relentlessly searches and cares for the unlovely,
the forgotten,
the lonely,
the sinful, and
the ignorant.

How dare we jail the liberating force of life in mere cerebral action?
How can we resist its power to change and renew us?
We look into the mirror.
See our blood-shot eyes,
our five o'clock shadows.
But we turn and forget,
Commenting on the cheapness of the mirror.
It's a "right, strawy epistle"
The cracks
We're not sure of the author's identity
The lack of ornateness
Where is the Christology?

We don't shower.
We don't shave.
We don't change.
Ridiculous?
Of course.

This casual glancing and forgetting is a far cry from the close peering which results in change and transformation. A grave contrast lies between "conceptual experience" and "primary experience."

Conceptually, we might be overpowered by the theological *idea* of this passage in James—

James presupposes a Christology already known in
preaching and catechism.

Therefore, he is able to concentrate on the misuse
or inappropriation of that faith—

A faith that helps orphans and widows and tames
the tongue.

THIS IS EXCITING!

But such enthusiasm too easily forgets that we are being bewitched by the mere *form* of faith which comes to us in reading. Our readiness to go along with this form of reflection and to let ourselves be swept up by it,
though we understand it,
are devoted to it, and
are intellectually blessed,
does not mean that our whole

being—our very gut—has been swept up and fundamentally transformed by the basic faith itself. We have simply taken on extra theological baggage.

Part of our theological development does indeed involve conceptual fascination. It is natural. But it is equally dangerous if we remain there. If we live in the library we will never comprehend a penny's worth of what it means to extend the Kingdom of God,
to participate in battle with the Risen
Christ.
The
message of the gospel is much more than tidbits stored in tin cans of reflection—from which at any time it may be reproduced in the brain.

Truth must be handled in the first person—not the third person.
It acts as a mirror.
It confronts me.
He conquers me.
The crucial transition from technical reference to personal relationship occurs when I stop manipulating and dissecting truth, and it leaps off the antiseptic table and operates on me!

Our theological method must be saturated with the awareness that God has spoken in Christ *to me*. What God has said and is saying must be understood. It must also be answered. I must formulate a reply.
I must act.

This response in life takes us out of the library,
out of the pulpit,
out of the Commons.
It takes us to
those screaming for love—the widows and orphans of our land. And who are these? We think immediately of the ghettoes,
Songmy,
Biafra, and rightly so.
But let us not

forget those victimized,
suffering,
alone,
close to home,
within our seminary

the guy next to you,
our wives,

our children,
our professors,
our staff.

There is much pain among us.
Right here.
And we hide from it so well.

James' letter is not a definitive summary of the Christian faith. But it is the corrective to a theoretical and abstract creed. It emphasizes acts of love without which our profession has no meaning.

Put away your ornate pipes of contemplation, and like the soldiers of Napoleonic France, take up your short pipe of battle—a pipe gripped easily between the teeth. The aromatic clouds can mark the place where war counselors meet for strategy. But they must do more than that. They must become the cloudy pillar leading the pilgrimage. Only then may the pipe indeed become a symbol of true involvement.

WE HAVE SEEN THE WORLD AND IT IS OURS

BY RICHARD G. DE GRAW

When I was in my mid-teens I felt lost, wandering aimlessly through each day. I was an adolescent and I believed that in time I would be found. I never dreamed, then, of a career of wandering. I always thought maturity was just around the corner. I looked for an idol to emulate so I could find myself: John Kennedy was there (not for long) but I couldn't emulate him, I was Republican and Protestant; so there was Nixon, even then I couldn't be like him; Ginsburg was an old man even then and Ferlinghetti was too well off; my minister was an ass and I didn't know Christ. There was no one around I could believe in except myself and my friends, so we decided to make our own rules, redefine adulthood! I had struggled for survival in my earlier world but I was free from that. I had a new struggle, I needed to be me; I couldn't let myself be overwhelmed by reality. But the problem remained. All whom I met who knew who they were didn't seem to me to really know who they were. I forgot about waiting for my legs to be pulled out from under me and decided to hang loose and be pushed by the movements in my world. I rolled along, did right most of the time and remained uncommitted.

Later came that golden era of multiple murder. Richard Speck showed his respect for angels of mercy; Charles Whitman demonstrated the true feelings of the all-American boy; a man didn't like hair-styling so he discontinued four women, two manicurists and a hairdresser; a grandmother, mother and daughter were raped on Good Friday, one died, their cross was heavy; Elmo Smith initiated the proper way to pick up a date and waited six years for an electric chair to be vacant—no one ever found the tire iron. I was scared. My mind whizzed, banged, and boomed. I was closer to awareness, reality knocked on my door again—was survival of the fittest my direction?

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Suddenly I would think I knew definitely what the future held for me. I was worried about artificial suns, about never having a picnic spoiled by rain. I saw the underground house with built-in stars at the New York World's Fair—I snuck dates into a backyard bomb shelter. But then, just as suddenly, I had no idea about my direction for the future. But I saw that I could touch more. My reach had not gotten longer, but everything was being moved to within my grasp.

So my disposition varied. My lifestyle changed in an hour's daydreaming. I laughed and grooved on good stuff even while the world shuddered. I saw myself small, rolling in a calm before the storm. I saw spoon-fed, skinny-popping fantasies of other places, better mates. I saw myself and my others destroyed, numbered, computerized, spied on, tapped, busted, beaten, and 1984'ed. I soared and plunged at a moment's notice. Fantasies, mine, ours, our fantasies were the truth for us. Suppose they don't come true, suppose they are proven false—nothing matters less. What does count, and will count even after they're disproven, is that they were our fantasies. We saw Eden at tunnel's end and we saw endless torment at the end of the tunnel. But, because we were individually lost in this world, we became paralyzed. Our dreams sapped our energies. Words soothed our souls.

I, and each of my friends, was devoured constantly by new salvations, new goals, and I still am. Our conviction and the faraway dream in our eyes gained followers for us. But our eyes would fade and we would go directly to jail without passing Go. We would say we were crazy, a little stoned. But we started again, we were in orbit and we are still flying high.

We see dreams realized and we see the men, the stars, who realized them, but we are unimpressed. Each heroic feat and its stars will be accidental, as well as ingeniously planned. The men of adventure will be elevated because we have a need to elevate. But the stars of conquest will be interchangeable, picked arbitrarily. Miss America has looked the same for ten years. We recognize the interchangeability of the stars: other men make stars, anyone could be a star. And so our great leaps forward, our giant steps for humanity, are regulated by a creaking bureaucracy. Who wants to leap when it depends on an established crewcut and black-gray suit?

How can our eyes be opened
When we are blind?
How can our sight be pure
When our hearts are empty?
How can we use that most precious and lovely gift of sight
And yet not see reality?
How can we view a life
And think it less important than ours?
WE DO!—We have become so adept at distorting our own sight,
That we no longer see what is,
We only see what we think should be.

The world is not as small as our minds,
But we would like to see it so. . . .

It's ridiculous the way we live:
No one knows what the other person does
                    or means.
No one is quite sure what the other person
                    wants.
We don't believe the claims of our enemy
And we're not always sure of the thoughts
                    of our friends!
We never see
               what is really there
We only see
               what we think should be.
Our neighbors can't know something
               when we're not sure,
But we can be right while our brother is wrong.
In our big world
                    we live
                         in worry
That our neighbor
     down there

up over
behind
Might just be better than the likes of us.
So in our mind we make sure he's worse.
So that each LITTLE person
contributes to our big,
wide,
wonderful world
of FEAR!

I seem lost,
floating in a negative world.
Direction is neither here nor there,
absurdity plows the fields,
obscurity decides my future.
Floating, bobbing, dipping,
my decks awash,
my cargo shifted.

Lying to in the waves
I am battered on one side
not helped on the other;
calm is no help.
Foredecks dropping under;
water finds its own level.
Air bubbles burst at the surface.
Midships and aft sliding downward,
Surely they'll go under.
Hold your breath,
your mind will be smothered.

She's going under!
Floating downward—stopping?
  Shallow water?
  A ledge?
  Mountain?
  Miracle?
The captain's deck is dry,
  her head stands out of water.
Now all we must do
  is refloat her.
All I must do is salvage her;
  all I need do   is swim. . .

Where do you swim while adrift at sea,
Where do you go when you're lost in life?
Who do you call when heads don't turn,
Who do you hold when so few are warm?

In the endless sea of bobbing heads,
In the emasculated forest of walking legs,
In the gaudy group of overripe bellies,
Where are the beautiful people?

Where are the Christs, the Buddhas, the Kings,
Where are the kind, warm, wonderful beings,
Where are the sons of God and the wives of lovers,
Where are the divine ones—those who *really* know?

Where do you go when you're alone in the crowds,
Where everyone likes you and smiles and lies,
Where everyone's pleased to have you to dinner
    and feed you dessert and see you go home,
Where do you go when, but for one, you're alone?

Where are the leaders who really care,
the ones who actually love?
Where are the men who are closest to God,
the ones who make life worthwhile?
They're dead, my friend, they're dead,
Their friends found them guilty!

How do I break my cycle?
My father is poor
My father is dumb.
My mother's a whore
She works in a slum.

How do I stop the trend?
My sister's thirteen
She lives in a dream.
She spends her days
In all the same ways.

How do I stop the repetition?
My brother's on dope
He has no more hope.
My younger brother's nine
He's hooked on the wine.

What do I do about my role?
I've just gotten booked
For getting my girl hooked.
She used to be sweet, but not any more
To pay her habit she lives as a whore.

What do I do after this?
Should I just sit and cry
Until my next fix?
But no, no wait,
I think
I think I'll just die.

Absorbing the beauty of Nature,
Is that what we do?
Absolving the nature of Beauty,
Is that where we are?
Dissolving the unity of Structure,
Who knows what we do?
Destroying the structures of Unity,
Who cares what we do?

Who cares what we do
When we hide the body.
Who does know why
When we exploit the skin.
Who does care, who really knows
Why man is still alive—
He has killed everything worthwhile!

Once, just once, perhaps, men should question the meaning of their own lives. Men should ask only once; once is enough because an answer is never available. So, if man asks the question of the meaning of his life more than once, then he has deluded himself into believing that he answered himself after the previous question. Or, if he asks the meaning of his life knowing full well that he never answered his earlier question, then he is deluding himself again by believing that he has learned so much since he asked the last question that he can now answer the question of the meaning of his life. So, alas, if a man asks the question of the meaning of his life more than once in his lifetime, he is either a perfect fool or an imperfect optimist.

The soldier plods through mud, and blood.
The politician sits at home, speaks of death.
And the politician tells the soldier to die
And the soldier nobly consents.
And the young men leave their colleges, wives, and dogs
To flock to the politician
And be told when to die.

Will their glory reign eternal
When their body leaves this earth?
Glory can't be eaten
And medals can't be loved!
So the wives are left with a letter
That says, in wonderful words,
"He is dead, he died like a man."

The politician smiles and says the war was grand,
And the woman sobs so silent
When asked, "Where is your man?"

How sweet the apple is, how tasty its fruit.
How could its gentle juice burn the flesh of
man? How could smooth, cool skin brand our
flesh? Why would its moisture-laden meat
rot in our throats, putrefy in our stomachs?
Why, we ask, why? The reason that the fruit
of a white, soft flower would eternally de-
stroy man is because God loves us; because
God loves us; because God loves us?

Need we destroy for Christ's sake? Is the death of men a victory? Does the Spirit entice us to pull the trigger? Does Christ care? Does Man care? Would the stone roll away in our world? Can we do any better with a new life? Can't we do better with the old one? Are the new angels shaped like B-52's? Can the dove fly any longer? Is there anyone to feed it? Is there a place for it to land? Is the Trinity the Big Four? Does the Spirit veto Christ? Does Christ have a vote? Did the veil really tear? Was there once blood for the sake of love? Is blood still spilled only in love? I would hope so, but I doubt it, I truly doubt it.

THE PRESBYTERIAN LAY COMMITTEE: A STUDY IN DISSENT

BY WILLIAM J. LARKIN

THE Presbyterian Lay Committee (PLC) is an organization of laymen which has been the rallying place for many laymen, bewildered and disappointed by the United Presbyterian Church's current emphasis on social action and practice of making social pronouncements. The Lay Committee is also a favorite whipping boy and symbol of dissent for those clergy and laity who are in harmony with the denomination's emphases on corporate social action as the valid and relevant expression of the church's mission. Obviously, this committee is not a social action agency in its objectives, and yet it does function as one in that it attempts to influence and change the thinking and action of a corporate body, the United Presbyterian Church. This study is undertaken to discover how these objectives and the functioning of the organization are actually related. Also, in the light of current controversy over the nature of the mission of the church, the Committee remains an articulate spokesman for the theological position of a significant portion of the membership of the denomination concerning the relation of the church's mission to social and political issues. Whatever one develops as his theology of social change, the PLC's position must be dealt with intelligently.

I

In the fall of 1964 seven businessmen gathered for lunch in New York City. The purpose of their meeting as Presbyterian laymen was to discuss the current trends in the theology and mission of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. From their concern grew an organization, chartered in the State of New York as the Presbyterian Lay Committee, Inc. Its objectives stated in that charter are

To work within the Church for the following goals:

> 1. To put greater emphasis on the teaching of the Bible as the authoritative Word of God in our seminaries and churches.

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> 2. To emphasize at every opportunity the need for preaching the Gospel of Redemption with evangelical zeal and to stress the need for regular Bible study and prayer.
>
> 3. To encourage ministers and laymen alike to take their place as individuals in society and, as led by the Holy Spirit, to become involved in such social, economic and political problems and to assert their position publicly as Christian citizens on all such matters.
>
> 4. To discourage public pronouncements by Church leaders speaking for the Church as a corporate body, either specifically or by implication, on political, social and economic questions.
>
> 5. To provide an adequate and reliable source of information for laymen on significant issues confronting the Church, including those being proposed for consideration at General Assembly or other judicatories, to enable laymen to express an informed position.[1]

The Lay Committee's first denomination-wide action was to publish in *Presbyterian Life* a "Call to Presbyterian Laymen." This disseminated for the first time the objectives of the committee. It expressed concern that

> the last fifty years has witnessed a growing effort within the church to act as a corporate body in efforts to influence government and people in economic, social and political affairs instead of first converting men to Christianity and then encouraging those men to fill their individual role as Christians in civic affairs.[2]

As a result the church has been diverted from its true mission. The church has continued in its error because although "the authoritative message of salvation, which has power to change the hearts of men, is declared by the Holy Scripture . . . , men who doubt the full integrity and authority of the Bible soon lose confidence in its message."[3] Thus the call urges the whole church to affirm belief in the Bible as the Word of God, to encourage a return to Christ as Redeemer, to emphasize again serious and intensive Bible study and prayer, to seek the power of the Holy Spirit in all things, and to help re-establish the evangelical zeal of the church.

During the next year 1966, the Lay Committee issued seven information bulletins, "The Restorer," to keep laymen informed of significant issues confronting the church, "counseled with other groups of laity and pastors in many places in the U.S. to encourage faithful responsibility within the church,"[4] and received 12,000 letters commenting on the Lay Committee's efforts.

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[1] Pamphlet, "Presbyterian Lay Committee (PLC): Questions and Answers."

[2] "A Call to Presbyterian Laymen," *Presbyterian Life*, December 1, 1965, p. 18.

[3] *Ibid.*

The final action of the Committee in 1966 was to place half-page ads in the New York *Times* and many other leading newspapers across the nation. These ads called for the defeat of the Confession of 1967 by the presbyteries, and stressed the same issues as the *Presbyterian Life* article but with total attention to the Confession of 1967. Concerning the proposed confession's emphasis on the church's mission in social action it objected, "Do you accept the belief that your church should take whatever position on any political, social or economic issue the governing body of the church decides is the proper one?"[5] Those who would join the Lay Committee in answering this question in the negative were urged to speak to their pastor and session representative to presbytery and strongly encourage them to vote the proposed confession down.

The method of using the public press was defended by the Lay Committee as an expedient for reaching as many laymen as possible since they did not have a denominational membership list. Further,

> We recognize that we are considered a minority, but, if so, we have as much right to express our views in the public press as do our Church leaders who issue statements to the press on all manner of social, political and economic issues.[6]

The response to the national advertising was further national exposure in *Time*, Jan. 6, 1967; *Christian Century*, Jan. 11, 1967, and *Presbyterian Life*, Feb. 1, 1967.

The organizational structure for 1966 was a growing board of directors to number eventually eighteen, one staff person and office help. The budget was receipts, voluntary contributions: $78,912; disbursements: $99,024; balance taking into account a forwarded balance: $11,162.

The year 1967 saw the adoption of the Confession of 1967 and the Book of Confessions as the confessional standard of the United Presbyterian Church. The committee accepted the action but affirmed its right to press for amendments to eliminate contradictions in the Book of Confessions and strengthen support for the authority of the Bible. At the request of the Stated Clerk of General Assembly, it reported to General Assembly its activities and budget and in that way was recognized as an affiliate member. The basic recommendation of its report was a call for greater emphasis on evangelism.

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[4] *Journal of the Minutes of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.* 1967, p. 921. (Hereafter cited as *Journal of the General Assembly.*)

[5] J. D. Murch, *Protestant Revolt.* Arlington, Va., 1967, p. 204.

[6] *Journal of the General Assembly,* 1969, p. 921.

At the invitation of the Stated Clerk of General Assembly the board of directors of the Lay Committee aired its views with other members of the church in a Washington, D.C. "Consultation on the Nature and Mission of the Church." Changes within the committee were a revision of Objectives three and four and the engaging of a Field Director to direct the establishment of local chapters of the Lay Committee on the presbytery level. Their purpose was "to encourage greater involvement of laymen in the activities of their local church and presbytery."[7] The revised objectives read (revisions in italics):

> 3. To encourage ministers and laymen alike to take their place as individuals in society and, as led by the Holy Spirit, to become involved in such social, economic and political problems *in which they have some competence,* and to assert their position publicly as Christian citizens on all such matters.
>
> 4. To discourage public pronouncements by Church leaders speaking for the Church as a corporate body, *either specifically or by implication,* on political, social and economic questions, *unless there are spiritual moral issues which can be supported by clearcut Biblical authority.*

The 1967 budget was receipts: $244,214; disbursements: $254,570; balance taking into account balance forwarded: $2,241.

During 1968 the Lay Committee continued to grow in membership and developed its methods of influence: a monthly newspaper, local chapters and meetings between the board of directors and high church officials. The newspaper, *The Presbyterian Layman,* asserted its editorial policy to carry out objective five and "try to be accurate, fair, honest, straightforward and constructive"[8] in its content. It also pledged not to damage the peace, unity and purity of the church. "We have, for example, handled with restraint letters and news releases about efforts of individual churches to withdraw from the denomina-

[7] *Ibid.,* 1968, p. 646.

[8] *Ibid.,* 1969, p. 1176.

tion or to withhold funds from General Mission."[9] The circulation of the paper reached 170,000. There were local chapters in 73 geographical areas active or in the process of formation. The Committee met with church officials on five different occasions. These included the heads of all the major boards and agencies of the church.

Specific action taken by the Lay Committee in 1969 on social issues centered around General Assembly pronouncements and some local presbytery action. In its report to General Assembly, PLC recommended that the specifics of the General Assembly action concerning evangelism in 1963 be put into effect. An editorial in the June 1968 issue of *The Presbyterian Layman* indicates the response to the social action advocated by the 1968 General Assembly.

> The theme of Social Change was evident to practically every action and recommendation of every board, agency, or committee. This search for ways to change the structure of society and to improve the material environment of man was given top priority and was conducted with a great sense of urgency. Little attention, however, was given to the business of changing the hearts of men, the main mission of the Church. It was hard to find any spiritual reference or concern in many of the reports and recommendations. When such references did appear, they seemed to be afterthoughts rather than basic to the recommendation. . . . We commend those lay Commissioners who had the courage and conviction to speak out on the important issues of the Assembly . . . [and] unless laymen [continue to] stand up and speak out, they are going to lose their rights and privileges by default.[10]

The Lay Committee was commending those lay commissioners who spoke out against proposed social pronouncements and challenged what seemed to them and the Lay Committee to be the railroading tactics of deciding everything in committee and foreshortening debate on the floor of General Assembly.

The PLC responded to various presbyteries, who spoke out in support or against the proposed grape boycott undertaken by Caesar Chavez and his United Farm Worker Organizing Committee, representing migrant workers in California, in an editorial in *The Presbyterian Layman*, November 1968. After commending the leaders of the church for not taking a position on this issue and ruling that any judicatory which took such a stand would be out of order, the editorial stated:

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[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *The Presbyterian Layman*, June 1968, p. 8.

> Regardless of the merits on either side in a dispute of this nature, the Church has no earthly business taking sides or getting involved in it in any way. The issuance of pronouncements by an official church body, speaking for the corporate Church, urging and expecting members to participate in an economic boycott, is a misuse of Church authority.[11]

It bolstered its argument by referring to Objective 4 of the Lay Committee; the more absorbed the church becomes in secular issues, there is "less and less time to devote to its main mission of cultivating the spiritual lives of its members so that each member can in turn deal with any and all secular problems more effectively as a witnessing Christian"; and finally, involvement in such an issue is bound to bring division within the church. Thus, discouraging members across the nation from buying grapes harvested in California in view of the grievances of the migrant workers' labor union was seen as lacking any sufficient Biblical grounds for support and as positively detrimental to the unity and continuing spiritual mission of the church.

The organizational structure of PLC was broadened in 1968 to include an executive vice president and publisher, an editor and three ministers serving as theological advisers. The executive vice president became the chief among staff personnel. He was to be concerned with the newspaper, representing PLC in person or through correspondence and in that way making some decisions between board of directors' meetings. The theological advisers provide much material for the paper and help interpret current theological trends and encourage growth in faith through the use of Scripture and relevant doctrinal works. The budget for 1968 was receipts: $442,665; disbursements: $374,993, and final balance: $70,330. It also reported at the request of the Assembly the cost of producing the advertising opposing the Confession of 1967 as $151,236.

At the General Assembly in 1969 the Lay Committee was the subject of controversy on two issues. PLC had conducted a survey of Christian education materials: junior high, senior high, and adult for the fall of 1968 through April 1969. These surveys uncovered some questionable material which PLC categorized in its report under the headings: "Profane, Blasphemous, Anti-Christian, Otherwise Objectionable." It submitted these surveys through the proper channels: the Stated Clerk of General Assembly; the moderator, the General Secretary of the Board of Christian Education, and the president of that board, and made its voice heard. Finally, a subcommittee of the standing committee on Christian Education at General Assembly sanctioned the Board's work but conceded, "Some of the material may be in poor taste and could offend conservative-minded members. . . . The staff members who met with the committee assured the sub-committee that every effort is being made to avoid needless offense in the material distributed."[12] In conversation with James J. Cochran, executive vice president of PLC, I learned that the survey of Christian Education materials will continue. He said that the Lay Committee hoped to keep the membership informed on the emerging curriculum as it did in its article in *The Presbyterian Layman*, March 1968, which covered the introduction of the Christian Faith and Action materials.

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[11] *Ibid.*, November 1968, p. 6.

The other issue of controversy was the constitutionality of the third and fourth goals of the Lay Committee. The Rev. Gustavus Warfield and others organized "The United Presbyterian Grass Roots Committee for the Sovereignty of Christ." This organization mounted a campaign whose objective was stated in Overture 53, Newark Presbytery: "To determine whether or not the third and fourth goals of the Presbyterian Lay Committee, Inc., are in accord with the Scriptures, the Book of Confessions and the Book of Order."[13] The cause was publicized by an article in *Monday Morning*, a bi-weekly magazine for Presbyterian ministers, and a mimeographed newsletter to every minister. The *Monday Morning* article concludes with a description of the Lay Committee that seems to be fairly representative of the impression it has made in the church-at-large:

> The battle can be won if enough sincere and thoughtful laymen are made aware of the unrepresentative character of the board of directors; if they realize that this unrepresentative character gives the Presbyterian Lay Committee a particular political bias; and if their eyes are opened to a curious phenomenon—a corporation using highly organized methods and extensive communications media to weaken the church's influence in matters which deeply affect human welfare by trying to convince the church that *individuals only* have the right to speak out for social righteousness. . . .[14]

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[12] *Journal of the General Assembly*, 1969, p. 450.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[14] *Monday Morning*, March 24, 1969, p. 12.

The standing committee on overtures found no difficulty in accepting goal three. But, "the language of said Objective No. 4 was unfortunate because: (1) it is negative; and (2) it is ambiguous and could be construed as an effort to prevent the judicatories of the Church from making public pronouncements on political, social and economic questions."[15] The committee recommended and it was approved that a special committee of seven be appointed to consult with PLC on redrafting the goal. Mr. Cochran reports this committee met amicably with the board of directors of PLC, chapter presidents and staff personnel, Sept. 19, 1969, to consider this matter.

In the July-August, 1969, issue of *The Presbyterian Layman*, the PLC responded to the half dozen pronouncements of the General Assembly on the recognition of Cuba, rejection of the proposed ABM Safeguard system, establishing of draft counseling centers in local churches, and support for the farm workers. It opposed such pronouncements in line with its fourth objective and claimed the reason for this opposition was that such pronouncements cause division in the church. The Lay Committee also objected to the reception that James Forman was given. ". . . The standing ovation given by the General Assembly to an admitted anti-Christian, humanist, and socialist . . . was an insult to decency, order, and everything else that the United Presbyterian Church stands for."[16]

The further activities of the Lay Committee in 1969 included a June 11, 1969, letter attacking the letter of May 9 from the Stated Clerk and the Moderator of the General Assembly which called for pressure to be placed on Congress to defeat the ABM system. The General Assembly communiqué was one-sided and hence divisive to the church, claimed the PLC. It offered to send information supporting ABM to interested Presbyterians so they could objectively decide the issue. Again warning of division, Roger Hull, president of PLC, concluded that once one has decided his view on the issue after investigating all the facts that he would make it known to his senator "as an American citizen and not as a Presbyterian citizen."

July 21-28 was a time of dialogue, "Conversations on Christian Social Involvement," between members of the Lay Committee and the Office of Church and Society staff. Chief participants for the Lay Committee were James Cochran, executive vice president, and theological adviser, George Fuller.

[15] *Journal of the General Assembly*, 1969, p. 570.

[16] *The Presbyterian Layman*, July-August, 1969, p. 1.

Inspired by the U.S. Congress on Evangelism held in September in Minneapolis, the Lay Committee is beginning a series of evangelism workshops for laymen at the local chapter level, the first held November 23 at the First Presbyterian Church, Ridgewood, N.J. Finally, the number of chapters continues to grow and their influence in the church promoting involvement of laymen in the church increases. Mr. Cochran gave this example. The Pittsburgh chapter of PLC persuaded Pittsburgh Presbytery to change its stated meeting time from morning through afternoon to late afternoon (4 p.m.) through the evening. This very practical consideration has opened up the possibility of more lay participation in the presbytery from those laymen who cannot afford to miss a full day of work but can be excused in the early afternoon to attend the meeting.

The organizational structure has expanded in 1969 to accommodate the growth in the number of local chapters. Two associate field directors were appointed to work in the Midwest and Northwest with the 23 chapters that are actually functioning. In conversation with Dr. William J. Larkin, theological adviser to the Chicago chapter, it was learned that the activities of a chapter have been limited to quarterly meetings at which a staff member or a member of the board of directors, e.g., J. Howard Pew or Roger Hull, would address the group. The Chicago chapter also has its own newsletter through which it attempts to inform Chicago Presbyterians of the purposes of the group. A local chapter is autonomous; has no financial obligations to the national organization; need not require the payment of the national membership fee of graded association, $10 to $1000 per year, for membership in its chapter; need only subscribe to the five objectives of PLC and as a current concern supply the national office with the names of those interested in the purposes of the Lay Committee. During the controversies over the Christian Education material and the constitutionality of objectives three and four, the executive vice president handled all of the correspondence. In the case of the survey, copies were sent to the committee which conducted the survey which included staff personnel, theological advisers, and members of the board of directors. The president of the board of directors, Roger Hull, also speaks for the committee; e.g., the letter on the ABM issue was signed personally by him, its letterhead being, "A Letter from the Presbyterian Lay Committee." There is no budget available for 1969, yet the estimates are that it will somewhat exceed 1968. The most costly item in that budget was the publication of the newspaper: $214,342 for a circulation of 200,000. PLC hopes to increase this to 350,000 in 1969. That added expense, plus the addition of more staff personnel, will certainly mean a larger budget.

II

The following analysis of PLC will make use of the categories of resources the organization has for influence. We have already given a description of the material resources as they have grown in the history of PLC. Since the budget does not itemize receipts but only lists it under the one general heading of contributions, it is difficult to discover the breadth of financial support they are receiving. The board of directors is composed of prominent businessmen:

> M. M. Anderson, Director, Alcoa; George Champion, Director, Chase Manhattan; Jasper Crane, Director, E. I. Dupont; Paul J. Cupp, Chairman, Acme Markets; Ronald C. Doll, Ed.D, Dean, Professional Studies, Richmond College, U.C.N.Y.; Fred Russell Esty, Chairman, United States Banknote Corp.; Roger Hull, Chairman, Mutual of New York; Andrew Hughes, V.P. and Treas., Rheem Mfg.; John H. Jenks, P. E. Partner, Jenks and Adamson; Lem T. Jones, Vice President, Empire State Bank; Carlton G. Ketchum, Chairman, Ketchum, Inc.; Hugh F. MacMillan, Sr., V.P. & Secy., Coca-Cola Export Corp.; G. R. McGruther, V.P., Duro-Test Corp.; Clarence McGuire, President, Hoover Bros.; Claude Martin, Claude Martin Company; J. Howard Pew, Chairman, Sun Oil Co.; W. Robert Stover, President, Western Girl; Carl Trauernicht, attorney.[17]

Though this must be viewed as mere conjecture, it is likely that substantial financial support for the organization comes from these men. In addition, their prominence in business may be a positive factor in their influence on the denomination at large. The Lay Committee believes so, for they do not hesitate to publish the business accomplishments of their board members. PLC is still basing its nationwide influence on the published figures of its newspaper circulation and has not yet made known its membership strength. The chapter movement is only two years old, and the one indication of the growth in membership is the recent appointment of associate field directors.

[17] Pamphlet, "Presbyterian Lay Committee (PLC): Questions and Answers."

The intangible but most vital resource of reputation is a matter of conscious concern to PLC. They seem to have taken to heart the criticisms of Rev. Warfield and others and have attempted to become more representative. The prominence of the businessmen involved has in reality turned out to be a negative factor for reputation. It has aroused much talk of the committee as a club for men whose "average income would have to be stated probably in six figures."[18] Mr. Cochran responds that the board of directors would happily receive into its membership laymen from different occupations and different levels on the social scale: "We would even take a plumber," he says. The problem is that the only laymen who have dared to speak out and become involved have been men of the caliber cited above. Furthermore, because of limited funds the Lay Committee has to ask the board members to pay their own way to the quarterly board meetings in New York City. This means not only time but money that only businessmen on the higher management levels could afford to expend. PLC is truly interested in broad representation, indicated by the fact that the chapter presidents were included in the last board meeting and that the board has even negotiated with some black laymen to join the board. This was not successful, for at least one of the black men felt that he would be thought an "uncle Tom" if he identified with such a group. PLC realizes the negative image with which it has impressed the church and is trying to remedy this in the area of being truly representative of the thought of a great portion of Presbyterian laity.

Another aspect of their negative reputation is their posture as dissenters. Despite the passage of the Confession of 1967, PLC continues to oppose the weaknesses it sees in it and calls for amendments to strengthen it. It continues to call into question the trend of the church away from concern for spiritual needs to action on social, economic, and political problems. Yet, at the same time, PLC professes its loyalty to the church and refuses to encourage schism or withdrawal of financial support.

This stance of dissent is the most powerful aspect of the reputation of PLC. And since reputation is the most valuable of resources for this type of organization, this posture continues to preserve an opportunity for its voice to be heard and some of its objectives to be obtained. In short, PLC has maintained a cutting edge; it has re-

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[18] *Monday Morning,* March 24, 1969, p. 11.

mained a voice and not become an echo when the conflict over the change in confessional position was resolved. In contrast, Presbyterians United for Biblical Concerns (formerly Presbyterians United for a Biblical Confession), an evangelical fellowship predominantly of ministers, has lost its cutting edge through its endorsement of the Confession of 1967. PUBC was able to amend the final draft of the confession and strengthen its section on the Bible, making it minimally acceptable for conservatives. Through the liberal and neo-orthodox segment of the church compromising and adopting this strengthened section, it was natural that PUBC respond and endorse the whole confessional change. The motivations of PUBC aside, i.e., whether it was compromise or wholehearted support which they gave to the Confession of 1967, because of its endorsement this group was no longer in a position to voice clear-cut dissent. It had become part of the mainstream of the denomination again.

Given the influence of this posture of dissent, what will PLC need to do to make it an even more effective tool for achieving its objectives? Lest PLC be dismissed as a small group of insignificant dissidents, it will need to show its significance by an enlarged base of membership support which should make up a significant portion of the Presbyterian laity. It does this now through the circulation figures of its newspaper, 350,000 by the end of 1969. However, these must be converted to membership figures to be convincing. This it is doing in its chapter multiplication and its continuous call for laymen to be involved, stand up and be counted. Secondly, PLC will have to rid itself of the negative stigma surrounding any dissenting group and show some positive actions. This it is beginning to do in the evangelism workshops. Thirdly, PLC must project an irenic spirit to the denomination as a whole. This is in fact what Mr. Cochran said he wished me to take away from the interview I had with him. He definitely did communicate this to me. For example, when asked about COCU, which the Lay Committee is on record as opposing, Mr. Cochran said that if it went through, PLC would still remain faithful to the church and seek to achieve its objectives within it.

Finally, PLC must be careful not to compromise its position in such a way that it too can be identified with mainstream Presbyterianism again. The special committee appointed to help PLC redraft objective four could have the effect of making the organization safe for existence within the denomination. However, the general thrust of the organization is enough at variance with the denomination to be able to maintain its posture as a dissenter. The problem for PLC as a dissenting body is to preserve a cutting edge that challenges and yet is still seriously listened to. On the other side, PLC needs to speak this "truth" in "love" with an irenic spirit which does not dissolve into a compromise echo of the mainstream. The Stated Clerk's word of assurance and his actions on behalf of responsible dissent give hope to PLC that its voice will continue to have the opportunity to be heard.

The leadership ability of the organization has been quite good as one might expect from the caliber of men on the board of directors. PLC has not been afraid to be flexible, revise its methods and learn from the criticism of others. Since the organization is still expanding, its structure has not yet adopted a fixed form. Since the organization is voluntary, e.g., one can belong still without paying a membership fee, its objectives are fairly general as far as the action to which it calls its membership, e.g., involvement in the local church and presbytery. Since it views itself as an enabling and educational functionary, the leadership has very few controls over its membership. All it asks now is that the local chapter subscribe to the objectives of PLC. Thus, although leadership is good in its adaptability to new situations, its only external control which could be used to marshal support for a cause, e.g., votes in the General Assembly or numbers which the leaders could say they speak for, is adherence to the objectives of PLC.

The strength of the resource of reputation in the form of a dissenting voice can only be actualized if skill and leadership ability are energized by a will to see objectives accomplished—a unity of purpose. This PLC has advocated quite strongly. With their five objectives constantly in mind, every action of its board and officers, indeed every article in its paper, can be seen as an expression of one of these objectives. Despite opposition from the church hierarchy, expressed through lack of immediate response to the Christian education materials survey or Rev. Warfield's group, PLC has continued toward the achievement of its goals. There is a balance in their goals between long-range (numbers one and two) and continuing immediate ones (numbers four and five) that sufficient momentum may be built up by the attainment of the short-range goals to sustain the membership as it aims to complete the long-range objectives.

III

The belief system of PLC centers in its five objectives. The line of reasoning which they reflect is as follows: Authority is the key to the content of one's belief; the content of one's belief determines the action which will be taken in the mission of the church. For PLC the authority is the Bible interpreted in the orthodox, supernaturalistic framework. The content is a gospel of individual salvation, which reconciles man to God; the action in mission is evangelism. When social action takes place, it is done by individual Christians with some competence in the particular area of social, political, or economic problems, while any corporate action embodied in a church leader speaking out is to be discouraged unless there is clear-cut Biblical authority for speaking out on spiritual and moral issues. Finally, since belief and action are content-oriented, PLC seeks to provide a source of information so laymen may decide on the significant issues confronting the church.

The authority base which PLC chooses is very sound, and its method of interpretation is basically good. The inclusion of theological advisers has added some refinement to their approach. Yet, they seem to maintain a somewhat anti-intellectual strain in their attempts to understand difficulties in Scripture. Where difficulties arise they introduce faith as the appropriate response: "We accept on faith that which we cannot understand or which seems contradictory to us."[19] This method is viable if one realizes the difference between faith in the content of Scripture and faith in one's interpretation of it. PLC is composed of laymen and not theologians, and thus one would expect a less than totally sophisticated approach to Scripture. The problem is that this fact compounds the difficulty in trying to communicate to those who accept scientific historical-literary criticism of the Bible wholeheartedly even at the expense of articles of faith and those who are not prepared to accept its findings at the expense of the traditional faith structure.

Besides a tendency towards anti-intellectualism another difficulty in the authority structure of PLC is that it seems to derive its content from a source other than the Bible. PLC does have a political, social, and economic philosophy. Although it does not state it explicitly, PLC calls all ideologies which oppose this philosophy anti-Christian.

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[19] Pamphlet, "*The Presbyterian Layman* Is a Slanted Publication."

> We are slanted against *all* anti-Christian ideologies which modern theologians have allowed to creep into their beliefs: humanism, existentialism, socialism, Marxism, Trotskyism, Maoism, communism, and all the other "isms" that are chipping away at Christianity today, as they have many times before in history.[20]

To reconstruct completely the philosophy which PLC is actually expounding would be mostly a matter of conjecture. On political and social issues there is a call for morality and "the rights of others, uniform justice for all and the responsibilities that should go with our rights, privileges, and freedoms."[21] Economically, capitalism is assumed as a good with the motives of the Protestant ethic as basically desirable. "We are slanted in favor of actions that recognize every person—whether white, black, yellow, red or brown—as an important individual who is more interested in being treated as a human being than he is in the material benefits we try to thrust upon him."[22] In sum, PLC affirms the American system as reflected in this criticism of a leftist book: "This book . . . is anti-just about everything this country stands for, lacks any religious reference, and expounds on erroneous radical economic points of view."[23]

PLC has become aware of this bias. From changes in handling of such issues one may conjecture that it realized that the promulgation of any such ideology was out of keeping with its general view that political, economic, and social issues should be decided on the merits of the facts judged by a criterion of that particular science, e.g., economics, and not from the value judgments of an ideology. Thus its anti-Christian category of the survey of Christian Education materials was eliminated, and the attitude when treating similar topics in the "Otherwise Objectionable" category was not as much a condemnation of the views expressed as a call for both sides of an issue to be presented so that one may make up his own mind. This new strategy seems much more promising and presents a constructive voice of dissent within the denomination.

In the content of belief which would determine the shape of mission, PLC stresses strongly the priority of individual conversion. This is a much-needed call in a day when theology has lost its awareness of transcendence and very readily reduces all reconciliation to a humanistic restored brotherhood. Yet, in emphasizing the special spiritual dimension of man's need, PLC has tended to compartmentalize man and not give attention to the whole of a man's existence. That it has fallen into this danger is understandable with all the emphasis on purely social action that is present today. PLC has, however, shown concern for physical needs by supporting Biafra Relief funds and the "One Great Hour of Sharing." Yet, it must begin to think through what the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life means. When I asked Mr. Cochran for an example of a spiritual or moral issue which can be supported by clear-cut Biblical authority and on which a church leader would have a right to speak out, he was able to cite the responsibility to stand for Christ in Hitler's Germany as a spiritual issue. He was not able to give me immediately a moral issue, but when I suggested voting fraud in Cook County (Chicago), he thought that was a good example. This conversation unfortunately showed this weakness in the area of social ethics with a Biblical base. The two issues in the area of content which need to be dealt with then are the relation of man's spiritual needs to his needs as a whole man and consequently, when he becomes a Christian his responsibility to Christ as Lord of every area of life. For the first I would propose a priority of necessity for meeting man's spiritual need although not necessarily a priority in chronological time. Whatever we do in service to men in Christian love, we should always be looking for an opportunity to speak to them relevantly of their need of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. PLC can make a significant contribution in the area of Biblical social ethics since its perspective includes a confidence in the authority and relevance of Scripture. If it would go beyond its "hands off" policy concerning the ethical or spiritual dimension of economic, social, and political issues that have no clear-cut Biblical authority, which to this point have been all the issues raised by the General Assembly, PLC might profitably begin to work on general principles from Scripture that it would ask Presbyterians to apply in analyzing an issue along with the procurement of the relevant facts. Thus, one could make not only an intelligent but a consciously Christian decision no matter which alternative he chooses since he has asked, "What does it mean for Jesus to be Lord of my life in this area?"

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[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] "Survey of Christian Education Materials," October, 1968, p. 18.

As far as action on this content of belief, PLC promotes personal evangelism and personal social action. Its objection to church leaders speaking out originally was based on citing Chapter 31, No. 4 of the

Westminster Confession. Now with a plurality of confessional documents, some of which support public pronouncements, PLC has changed its approach. It claims that such pronouncements will disturb the peace of the church and create division. This strategy will need to be bolstered by production of membership lists which show that PLC is representative of a large enough segment of the denomination membership in order to validate its objections. Then arises the difficulty of contradiction of a corporate organization speaking out for its membership against representative corporate pronouncements. Its only justification is that PLC tacitly has its membership support as long as it speaks out in accordance with its objectives to which all have agreed. This, however, prevents the possibly helpful practice of PLC employing Biblical ethics to an issue that is less than clear-cut.

The most valuable service PLC has rendered to the denomination so far is the educational and objective presentation of issues confronting the church. So fair and objective had it been in reporting General Assembly pronouncements one year that it had to make clear that reporting a decision was not supporting it.

The voice of the Presbyterian Lay Committee has been heard. Its desire to change its image and make it more attractive, the flexible leadership it has shown, and the steadfast unity of purpose promise that this voice will continue to be heard. The questions PLC must continue to face are how evangelism is related to social action in a constructive way and what the Lordship of Christ over all of life means for the handling of social, political, and economic problems today.

PASTORAL CARE OF THE CRIMINAL OFFENDER: A CASE STUDY AND THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

BY BARRY L. COX

On Friday, October 17, 1969, the following article appeared on the front page of a local newspaper:

> Funeral services were held Wednesday in Edison for Richard Harris, 24, of Bunker Hill Road, who died early Saturday after he was hit in the head with a shovel during an argument at a local migrant camp the night before.
>
> Charged with Harris's murder, meanwhile, is his brother-in-law, 21-year-old Daniel Bradley of the same address who surrendered himself to police on Saturday.
>
> The murder charge was officially filed against Bradley on Monday night in Edison Municipal Court. The case was expected to go before the grand jury today. Bradley originally was charged with atrocious assault and battery, but the charge was switched to murder after Harris died in Middlesex Hospital at 5:45 A.M. Saturday where he had been taken by the Edison First Aid Squad.
>
> Police said the pair apparently got into an argument at the camp on the William Maybury Farm on Station Road. About 11:45 Bradley allegedly struck Harris in the head with the shovel with such force that the wooden handle was broken.
>
> The case was investigated by Edison Police Chief Kenneth Miller.

On Saturday, October 19, while working as assistant chaplain at the Middlesex County Jail, I met Daniel Bradley for the first time and we established a counseling relationship. The subsequent counseling sessions constitute the data upon which this study is based.

Daniel is a Negro migrant worker, and typical of many inmates with respect to socio-economic background, patterns of personality development, and record of previous arrests. In my counseling experiences at the jail, I have been impressed with the recurrent prob-

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✠ Barry L. Cox received his A.B. degree from Westminster College in Pennsylvania, his B.D. degree from Princeton Theological Seminary, and is presently a candidate for the Master of Theology degree. All names in this article have been changed but the facts describe an actual case.

lems of identity formation observable in a wide variety of criminal offenders. For this reason I have adopted the issue of identity crisis in Erik Erikson's work as the perspective from which to analyze Daniel as a representative case.

In his developmental approach to human growth, Erikson has amplified social factors and extended them throughout the life cycle. He has translated the Freudian categories of ego, id, and super-ego into the interdependent processes of the organism, society, and the ego. Growth in his scheme is dependent upon the satisfactory resolution of successive crises. At all stages there is the interaction of forces within the organism and cultural influences outside the organism. The tension between these two is mediated by the agency of the ego, which is the organizing center that guards the individuality of the person.

It is my contention in this paper that the tension between societal influences and the internal forces of the individual in identity formation bears some correspondence to the theological tension between original sin and personal responsibility. Consequently, I have chosen to utilize the Christian concept of sin as the perspective for theological inquiry, with a view to drawing implications for the place of confession in pastoral care.

It is not my intention to either explain the origins of delinquent behavior or present a theological dissertation on the meaning of confession. Rather, I submit this study as an exercise in pastoral theology, intended to delineate a theological foundation for the place of confession in the pastoral care of the criminal offender. It is assumed that this study would have relevance for pastoral care beyond the confines of a correctional institution. I have chosen this narrowed focus, however, in concert with the data available to me in first hand experience.

I. PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF IDENTITY FORMATION

Erikson rejects the faddish equations of identity with the question "Who am I?" Rarely, if ever, would a person ask this question of himself. The more pertinent questions, if they can be put in the first person are, "What do I want to make of myself, and what do I have to work with?"[1] These are the questions of a developmental stage characterized by a diversity of changes in physical growth, genital maturation, and social awareness. If the young person is to answer

[1] Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York, 1968), p. 314.

satisfactorily these questions, he must come to feel a progressive continuity between what he has become during his childhood and what he promises to become in the anticipated future. The wholeness to be achieved at this stage is what Erikson calls a sense of inner identity. The danger of the ego-identity stage is role confusion, and as Erikson reports, where role confusion is based on a strong previous doubt as to one's ethnic and sexual identity, delinquent episodes are not uncommon.

The process of identity formation, usually unconscious, takes place on all levels of mental functioning. The individual judges himself as he perceives the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and their typology. Likewise, the individual makes a comparison between the way others judge him and the way he perceives himself and the types that have become relevant for him. In this process a distinction may be made between personal identity and ego identity. The feeling of having a personal identity is based both on the perception of selfsameness and continuity in one's experience, and the perception that others recognize that sameness and continuity. Ego identity is more subjectively an awareness of the sameness and continuity in the ego's synthesizing methods, the style of one's individuality, and the correspondence between that style and one's meaning for significant others in the immediate community.[2]

Daniel is twenty-one years old. Although no longer an adolescent chronologically, he is still struggling with the basic questions of identity. He has not felt the progressive continuity between that which he conceives himself to be and that which he perceives others to see in him and to expect of him. For Daniel there does not seem to be a sense of coherent individuation and identity, a sense of being one's self, of being all right, and of being on the way to becoming what others, at their kindest, take one to be.

The following is an excerpt from our first interview on October 19. Daniel requested to see the chaplain. I had no previous conversations with Daniel, and knew only that he had been recently arrested. He appeared in the doorway of the counseling room in the company of a guard. I introduced myself, asked him to have a seat, and closed the door behind us. Daniel was initially calm. He spoke softly, and at times almost inaudibly. As our conversation progressed he became slightly more animated, although his affect remained noticeably flat.

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Daniel: Nobody really understands me. They think I'm crazy. Sure I'm upset, I have problems, but I'm not crazy. [pause] I mean people have their own worlds—the drug addict, the thief, the Christian, the sinner. . . .

Chaplain: And your world?

Daniel: I look at it this way . . . really we're all in one world. You're a reverend, that's your world. You might have more education than I do or something like that, but we all live in one world. I cry, I laugh, I bleed just like anybody else, but people don't understand that.

Chaplain: You're a human being like everybody else, but you don't feel that people accept you on those terms. Is that it?

Daniel: Like my mother, she used to say, "You're bad, you're no good, you'll always be in trouble." My father and my relatives used to say that too. They said it right to my face. [pause] I don't know . . . maybe they were right. They used to say, "You'll probably end up in jail." Well, I guess they were right.

Chaplain: It hurt you that they said those things, but you get to wondering sometimes if maybe they were right.

Daniel: That's the way it was. Everything I did was wrong. I'd try and prove that they were wrong, but it never made any difference. Everything I did was wrong. Even when I knew I was right, I was still wrong.

Every person's psychosocial identity contains a hierarchy of positive and negative elements, the latter resulting from the fact that throughout his childhood the individual is presented with both evil and ideal prototypes.[3] The loss of a sense of identity is often expressed in a hostility toward the roles offered as desirable in one's family and immediate community.[4] Any aspect of the role, or all of it, can become the focus of disdain. As Erickson has stated, "Life and strength seem to exist only where one is not, while decay and danger threaten wherever one happens to be."[5] This was Daniel's experience. His conflicts, however, found expression in a more subtle way than the abrogation of personal identity. Daniel chose instead a negative identity, perversely based on all those prototypes and roles which, at critical stages of development, had been presented to him as most undesirable or dangerous and yet also most real. This negative identity sometimes seems to have more reality for Daniel than all of his natural attempts at being good.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 172-3.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

Negro youths have less chance for a continuity of identity in a milieu determined to let live only at the expense of a permanent loss of identity.[6] No individual can escape the opposition of ideal and evil images in the inventory of available prototypes. The unconscious evil identity, the composite of negative identifications, consists of the images of the ethnic outgroup and the exploited minority. In any system based on suppression, exclusion, and exploitation, as in Daniel's life as a migrant worker, the suppressed, excluded, and exploited unconsciously accept the evil image they are made to represent by those who are dominant.[7] Under the pressure of tradition and the limitations of opportunity, he was forced to identify with his own evil identity fragments. Where conditions of economic and ethnic marginality provide a poor basis for any kind of positive identity, a turn toward negative identity prevails. If such a negative identity is accepted by teachers, police, and judges, not to mention family, friends, and neighbors, then the youth not infrequently invests himself in becoming exactly what the careless community expects him to become.

Much of this is reflected in the excerpt below, taken from our third counseling session on November 1. I had noticed occasional periods of yawning in previous sessions, and it was particularly pronounced in this interview. Frequently Daniel would lean back in his chair, stretch his arms, yawn, and then slump over on the table with his head resting on his arms. I am uncertain whether this is an expression of hostility towards me or, as I am more inclined to believe, an attempt to control his "keyed-upness."

Daniel: My mother was always telling me what I'd done, all the bad stuff I used to do when I was little . . . things I couldn't even remember.

Chaplain: It was aggravating . . . her throwing things up in your face, things you'd done so long ago you couldn't even remember.

Daniel: Yeah, and she wasn't the only one. Seems like everybody was always telling me what I'd done. My parents would say, "Pay it no mind." But people would push, and push, and push, until you just can't take it any more. They're always telling you what you've done. Push. Push. Push.

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[6] Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York, 1950), p. 241.

[7] Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, p. 59.

Chaplain: You feel shoved around and can't ignore it.

Daniel: They'd tell me to be cool. "Take it like a man." Hell, you can take just so much, you know. People would push and push. They'd tell me, "Don't pay 'em no mind." But there's a limit how much you can take. They'd say . . . you know . . . "Be logical about it." That's O.K. if you're really cool. Like that guy on Star Trek . . . what's his name . . . you know. . . .

Chaplain: Mr. Spock.

Daniel: Yeah, Mr. Spock. That's great if you've got green blood, and intelligence like he does. I mean that's cool . . . the way he knows more what's going on in humans than they do. [pause] But even he ends up fighting them once in a while. [long pause]

I wish sometimes I hadn't been in my mother's womb. I didn't ask to be born. [pause] I'd rather have been a dog. At least he doesn't get arrested for what he does. [pause] He could get rabies and bite somebody. Then they'd shoot him, and that'd be it. But he could do what he wanted to do and not be arrested and locked up in here.

Chaplain: You feel like it would have been better not to have been born, than have to swallow all that people dish out.

Daniel: There's just so much that you can take. People keep pushing you. Then you do something and you get in trouble. They say you should have walked away. But if you did that, they'd say, "What's the matter with him? Can't he stand up for himself? He's got to go running to somebody else." Like, I believe you ought to stand up for yourself, but they don't understand that. [pause] You lose anyway. [pause] There's nobody I can believe in.

Chaplain: Nobody you can trust.

Daniel: Yeah, that's it, nobody I can trust. There's nobody . . . [with head down, and very softly] not even myself. [long pause]

My mother used to say stuff like, "A long time ago you must have done something, maybe even when you were born, and God decided you're going to have to suffer for it. And that's the way it is. You just have to suffer until he decides you've paid enough. That's just the way life is."

Chaplain: How do you feel about that?

Daniel: Makes no difference, there's nothing I can do. You be what people want you to be, whether you're right or not. If you're a little to the right, you're wrong. If you're a little to the left, you're wrong. You have to be straight down the middle . . . move in little straight lines, like a machine. They're happy as long as it's working right.

Chaplain: And if the machine doesn't do what they want . . .

Daniel: They kick it . . . and they keep kicking it.

"Many a sick or desperate late adolescent, if faced with continuing conflict, would rather be nobody or somebody totally bad, or indeed, dead and this by free choice—than to be not-quite-somebody,"[8] says Erickson. I think it must be admitted that there is a limit to an individual's endurance in the face of those who force him to consider himself, his needs, and his wishes as evil or no good, and to believe in the infallibility of those who pass judgment. "Occasionally, he may turn things around, become secretly oblivious to the opinion of others, and consider as evil only the fact that they exist: His chance will come when they are gone or when he can leave them."[9]

Daniel, frequently warned not to become what he had no intention of becoming, learned to anticipate what he must avoid. His positive identity was always in conflict with the past he had to live down and the potential future which had to be prevented. As a member of an oppressed and exploited minority, Daniel was aware of the dominant cultural ideals but was prevented from emulating them, and so fused the negative images held up to him by the majority with the negative identity in his own minority group. Driven by this extreme condition, Daniel found a greater sense of identity in being withdrawn and delinquent than in anything society had to offer him. If society diagnoses Daniel as criminal, simply to dispose of him efficiently, it may very well be the final step in the confirmation of a negative identity. So far, society has offered Daniel only this one convincing confirmation. It is little wonder that Daniel would choose not to have been born, rather than take his chances with a society so eager to confirm him as a criminal and then rehabilitate him as an ex-criminal.

A human being is at all times an organism, an ego, and a member of society. Erikson postulates that there is no individual anxiety which does not reflect a latent concern common to the immediate and extended group. Thus, an individual feels isolated and barred from the sources of all collective strength when he takes on a role considered especially evil by his group.[10] This seems abundantly clear in Daniel's case, as suggested in the following exchange from our fifth counseling session.

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Daniel: I used to fight with my little brothers, you know, just playing around. I wouldn't hurt them. They'd start crying, not because they were hurt . . . I mean their pride was hurt . . . but because they couldn't get back at me. My mother, she'd say, "I saw you punch your brother." Sure I punched him, but I didn't hurt him. We were just playing. They used to beat me for that. [pause] I figured it was better just to keep to myself. So if they came up to me, I'd just say, "Beat it." You're better off if you just keep to yourself, and that's what I'd do.

Chaplain: You were by yourself a lot.

Daniel: I was by myself all right. [pause] I was by myself since the time I was born. [long pause] I'd been better off if I had stayed away from everybody. My brother-in-law would have been alive today if I had just kept to myself. But no, he was always wanting me to go with him. Let's do this, let's do that, let's go here, let's go there, let's go to this place. He always wanted me to go with him. Half the time I didn't want to go, but I couldn't refuse him. I didn't want to disappoint him.

Chaplain: You feel you could have avoided a lot of trouble if you'd stayed away from people. But with your brother-in-law . . . you feel . . . like he forced himself on you . . . he's responsible too for what happened.

Daniel: [long pause] Life isn't very beautiful. [pause] When I get out of here I'm going to just stay by myself. I'll give my kids money when I've got it, but I'll just stay by myself. There's no use being together with anybody. That togetherness stuff is a lot of bullshit.

A corollary to Daniel's sense of isolation and estrangement is the curious fact that he sought intimacy with the most improbable partner. Erikson maintains that where an assured sense of identity is missing, relationships become desperate attempts at delineating the fuzzy outlines of identity by mutual narcissistic mirroring. Erikson says, "To fall in love then often means to fall into one's mirror image, hurting oneself and damaging the mirror."[11] It would be difficult to improve on Daniel's own account of this, as related in our seventh interview. The week before he had written a letter to his wife, more accurately the girl he had been living with, telling her to forget him and find someone else who could provide for her and the children.

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[10] Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, p. 36.

Daniel: You know it's a funny thing, I sort of want to forget her, but . . .

Chaplain: But find yourself still thinking about her.

Daniel: Yeah, I still keep thinking about her. [pause] It's funny. [pause] I want to tell you a story about her, O.K.?

Chaplain: Sure.

Daniel: Well, I met her in Edison. She was going with a friend of mine. Then I didn't see her for a long time. I was in town once and I asked this girl, "Where's that girl Willie used to go with?" She says, "She's over there." So I go over and say hello, and ask if she remembers me, and she says no. Well, we get to talking, and I went over to her house that night. I didn't know that she was pregnant. She was pregnant. Later this guy told me she was. But I like her, I was really attracted to her. I don't know what it was, I just really liked her. So I took her home to my house once. She was wearing one of those pant-suits, you know, and you could see she was pregnant. [laughing softly] So my mother, she says to me later, "You might be getting into something you don't know anything about." She says, "She's pregnant." I say, "I know that Mom, but I don't care. I really like her. I like the way she acts, the way she carries herself." My mother says, "Well, if you really like her there's nothing I can do about it. But if you do, you ought to marry her." You know the way mothers are. She says, "But if you marry her, and have children of your own, you'll look at your kids and know they're yours, and then you'll look at her kid and know he isn't yours. That could be a problem." But I didn't care, I really loved her. [pause] But her mother wasn't too keen on things either. She

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[11] Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis,* p. 167.

> wanted her to give up the baby, but she wouldn't do that. I liked that in her, standing up to her mother that way. But her mother used to say, "That Daniel is no good, he'll always be in trouble." So when I wrote her, I told her, "Tell your mother she was right, give her credit." I guess she was right about me. [pause] I don't know.

It should be remembered that, for Erikson, the counterpart of intimacy is distantiation. There is a readiness to repudiate, ignore, or even destroy those people perceived as dangerous to one's own essence.[12] Thus intimacy with one person may involve the repudiation of another. In Daniel's case, this could have been his own mother, as well as the girl's mother. Either weakness or excess in repudiation indicates an inability to gain genuine intimacy because of an incomplete identity. "Whoever is not sure of his 'point of view' cannot repudiate judiciously."[13]

Daniel's adolescent identity crisis has clearly been extended. The process of identity formation has been negatively oriented through conflict with significant others, and confirmed in its negativity by society. There are other dynamics to Daniel's case—sibling rivalry, repressed hostility, inability to cope appropriately with aggression, etc.—which I did not include in the psychological analysis because they were tangential to the primary concern of this paper. What has been included, however, is considered representative of the basic issues involved in identity formation, and sufficient for the theological analysis of sin which follows. I have especially attempted to include those aspects of the case which are illustrative of the tension between the internal forces in the individual and the external influences of family and society, now to be examined in light of the theological tension between original sin and personal responsibility.

II. THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SIN

The predominant biblical conception of sin is that of personal alienation from God. DeVries has reduced to three the common concepts of sin: 1) moralistic, in which sin is a deviation from some external ordinance; 2) monistic, in which sin is equated with man's physical nature; and 3) personalistic, the biblical view involving man's inner state of being and his relationship to God.[14] The prophets especially proclaimed that sin involves not so much the violation or transgression of an external norm, but man's personal relationship with God. This view dominates the Old Testament and is completely taken over in the New Testament. The essence of sin lies not in acts of transgression but in the depth of man's being, affecting the whole of man and the whole of his life. Understood as personal disobedience, the dominant biblical motif, sin is rebellion in the sense of rejecting relationship. Certainly this is part of Daniel's experience, with his sense of alienation, separation, and isolation, even in his family.

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 168. [13] *Ibid.*

[14] Simon J. DeVries, "Sin," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 1962, vol. 4, p. 362.

Sin is basically an act of perverted freedom, and consequently man is always held responsible for it. It should be noted, however, that the Bible makes a distinction between corporate and personal responsibility for sin. Prophets of the Old Testament, for example, proclaimed that it was not only a few bad apples, but the whole nation which was laden with sin. I think a case can be made for the fact that when corporate responsibility is emphasized, especially in conjunction with a moralistic view of sin as the transgression of some external ordinance, the effect produces a feeling of dread rather than a genuine sense of guilt. A true sense of guilt, with sorrow and shame, follows more from the feeling that one's sin is a personal offense against God, for which the individual is responsible. Jesus claimed that the righteousness obtained in keeping external ordinances was not sufficient. In fact, righteousness measured by such external standards leads to prideful boasting, not genuine inner piety. Likewise in Romans and Galatians, Paul clearly indicates that the sinner receives justification before God through faith in Christ, apart from works of the law.

All men are equally sinners in the sight of God. The Pauline assertion, "For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22, 23), is an indispensable expression of the Christian understanding of sin. Niebuhr points out that this assertion seems to weaken all the moral judgments which deal with the varying degrees of justice and goodness as revealed in the relativities of history.[15] It seems to eliminate the distinction between the oppressor and his victim. Correspondingly, those who are equally sinful in the sight of God may also be equally guilty in a specific situation. As a case in point, Daniel's family, and society in general, may be more equally guilty of his delinquency than a superficial analysis would reveal. "The Christian doctrine of the sinfulness of all men is thus a constant challenge to re-examine superficial moral judgments, particularly those which self-righteously give the moral advantage to the one who makes the judgment."[16] Those who are equally sinners in the sight of God, however, are not necessarily equally guilty of a specific sinful act to which they are related. While Daniel's family may be equally guilty for his delinquency, they cannot be considered equally guilty of the murder he committed. It should be noted that the Bible has emphasized this inequality of guilt just as much as the equality of sin.

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[15] Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York, 1941), p. 220.

In the biblical concept of sin there is a dialectical tension which must be maintained: man sins inevitably and by necessity but is nevertheless held responsible for his actions. Both dimensions have their scriptural foundation in Pauline teaching. Paul insists that man is without excuse in his sin: "So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him" (Rom. 1:20, 21). But Paul also regards sin as inevitable and related to the sin of Adam: "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Rom. 5:12). This is the paradox of original sin and human responsibility. While original sin by definition is an inherited corruption, or at least an inevitable one, it is not regarded as belonging to man's essential nature and therefore is not beyond the realm of man's responsibility.

Logical consistency is frequently sacrificed in order to maintain that the will is free in the sense that man is responsible for his sin, and not free in the sense that man can do nothing but evil. It is difficult to present the doctrine of original sin without either violating this dialectical tension or yielding to logical inconsistency. Thus, before considering the case of Daniel, it is necessary to examine two theological viewpoints which are consonant with the facts of human experience.

In the theology of Søren Kierkegaard, the existing individual bears the stamp of having been essentially altered by existence. This constitutes the untruth of the individual, which he calls sin. Man cannot be sin, neither can he be considered as having been eternally in sin. It is by coming into existence that man becomes a sinner. "He is not born as a sinner in the sense that he is presupposed as being a sinner before he is born, but he is born in sin as a sinner."[17] For Kierkegaard, this is original sin, and in this manner existence acquires a power over man. The moment a man is born, the instant he comes into being, he becomes another, he becomes a sinner. Existence surrounds the individual on all sides and cuts him off from communication with the eternal.

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 222.

The predicate "sinner" is first applied at the moment of birth, and it is then that existence acquires such overwhelming power that the act of coming into the world makes man another, makes him a sinner.[18] Consequently, the individual is unable to acquire sin-consciousness by himself as he can guilt-consciousness. In guilt-consciousness the identity of the subject is preserved; there is an alteration of the individual within himself. Sin-consciousness, however, is an alteration of the very individual, which shows that there is a power outside the individual which at his birth made him a sinner.[19] Original sin in this sense is an isolating determinant of existence which cannot be thought. "Sin, that is to say, is not a dogma or a doctrine for thinkers (in that case the whole thing comes to nothing), it is an existence determinant, and precisely one which cannot be thought."[20]

An alternative view, and one which even more thoroughly relates actual sins to original sin, is offered by Friedrich Schleiermacher. He maintains that there is a discrepancy between the speed of the evolutionary process in the biological development of mankind and the slower pace of the moral and spiritual development of man. Man's biological development is far ahead of man's spiritual development, and sin arises as a consequence of this discrepancy. Sin is understood as the distance between these two processes, the universal condition of mankind. In this view there is an evolutionary necessity of estrangement, and sin becomes both necessary and unavoidable. Kierkegaard repudiates this type of concept. If sin is the necessary result of the inadequacies of our spiritual life in relation to our physical life, then sin is a necessity and guilt is diminished.

For Schleiermacher, sin exists only where there is a powerlessness of God-consciousness, and it develops in man as a consequence of the impressions he receives from the totality of his finite existence. "We are conscious of sin as the power and work of a time when the disposition to the God-consciousness had not yet actively emerged in us."[21] The individual is conscious of sin partly as having its source within him, and partly as having its source outside his own being. Because the constitution of the individual and his personality development are dependent upon the previous generation and the existing social matrix, the sin of the individual has its source in something beyond and prior to his own existence. On the other hand, every single sin of the individual must necessarily have its source in himself. From one point of view, we distinguish between our good nature and our evil nature, and we are conscious of each of these as something received by us conjointly with others. From the other point of view, we recognize our evil nature as also being our own sin, since, instead of overcoming it by our actions we have voluntarily perpetuated it.[22]

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[17] Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Princeton, 1941), p. 186.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 517.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 518.

It is also true of physical and personality development, that it does not depend on the individual alone. The coming of the ego into the world at birth obviously cannot be regarded as our own act and as due to ourselves. "In truth, however, just as the coming of the ego is, with respect to each later generation, due to the action of the one before it, so the sinful self-assertiveness of sense, proceeding as it does from its earlier development, has a more remote source than the individual's own life.[23] But once the God-consciousness has emerged as a definite and effective agency, then every moment in which it does not manifest itself is a veritable sin originating in the individual himself.

Original sin is the sufficient ground of all actual sins; it brings forth and increases sin in oneself and others. In every individual original sin operates through the sin and sinfulness of others. It is transmitted by the voluntary actions of every individual to others and is implanted within them, and consequently is common to all. Only in its corporate character can original sin be properly and fully understood. "What appears as the congenital sinfulness of one generation is conditioned by the sinfulness of the previous one, and in turn conditions that of the later; and only in the whole series of forms thus assumed, as all connected with the progressive development of man, do we find the whole aspect of things denoted by the term, 'original sin.' "[24]

[21] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh, 1928), p. 273.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 280.
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 288.

III. PASTORAL-THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS, WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR CONFESSION IN PASTORAL CARE

Daniel's criminal action, the murder of his brother-in-law, is certainly a sin, but Daniel's behavior also represents the fruits of sin of which he is the victim. He is the victim of the sin in his society, the sin which permits cities and neighborhoods to breed racial prejudice, exploitation, and delinquency. It is not sufficient to know only that there is sin and alienation from God, but what lies behind the sin as the point of relevance for the work of the Spirit and God's promise of redemption. But our compassion for the victim ought not blur the sense of personal responsibility as a contributing factor to the individual's predicament.

Sin is pervasive in all our lives, and has about it a reciprocity in that the society in which we grow up tempts us to sin, and we in turn increase the corporate sinfulness of the society in which we live. The Christian interpretation of sin penetrates the level of deviant behavior, and strikes at the deeper inner level of our identity and our relationship to God. The fruits of sin are estrangement and separation from both God and neighbor, conditions beyond our own remedy. While these conditions may develop as a consequence of environmental influences on our lives from the culture and social setting, they must finally be acknowledged as our own responsibility.[25] The influence of the social situation may be tremendous, as in Daniel's case, but the individual cannot escape responsibility because of it. Part of what it means to deal with the person where he is, is that the pastor dare not minimize sin or the dimension of personal responsibility.

"At an unconscious level (or perhaps even consciously) man undoubtedly blames himself for the predicament into which his rebellion against God has led him."[26] It would seem logical for man not to blame himself, considering the degree to which he is the victim of original sin. It is empirically observable, however, that man does accept responsibility for his sin, although he makes every effort to project the blame.[27] "Guilt destroys the security within a person."[28] Guilt blocks an adequate relationship with God, and the individual is left forsaken and alone because of his sin. In desperation and anxiety over what may happen to him, he may, as Daniel did, try to run away from his sin and from his responsibility for it. For Daniel this meant concentrating on his victimization at the hands of his family and society, blaming those he loved for the things which he too was responsible, and even at one point blaming his brother-in-law. When this resentment subsides, the person feels guilty about the resentment, and more guilt leads to more anxiety, which again leads to more resentment.[29] Sin in this way isolates the self from other selves by a denial of love in the destructive emotions of resentment and hatred. In a real way this is the slavery of sin. "Because these destructive emotions are not dispersed but rather intensified in this vicious cycle, they leave the individual in a frame of mind that predisposes him to sin again."[30] Part of my task in counseling with Daniel was to assist him to break this "vicious cycle." But help in this sense could only be effected to the degree that Daniel himself assumed some measure of responsibility.

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[25] Albert C. Outler, *Psychotherapy and the Christian Message* (New York, 1954), p. 132.

[26] Paul Meehl, and others, *What, Then, Is Man?* (Saint Louis, 1958), p. 249.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] William E. Hulme, *Counseling and Theology* (Philadelphia, 1956), p. 103.

An important step in this process involves the problem of projection, in which the individual blames someone else for his own evil thoughts and sinful activity. Psychoanalysis points to the early process of differentiation between inside and outside as the origin of the defense mechanisms of projection and introjection. While in introjection the individual feels and acts as if an outer goodness had become an inner certainty, in projection he experiences an inner hurt as an outer one, and endows significant people with the evil which is actually in him.[31] Erikson reminds us that suspicion of his infantile origins remains in man. Since man's earliest sense of reality was learned by the painful testing of inner and outer goodness and badness, he continues to expect from some enemy in the outer world that which actually endangers him from within.[32] For Daniel, these dangers are his own angry drives and his own split inner world.

The projection of guilt may not stop with just blaming others for the sin which is one's own. A final stage may go so far as to endow God himself with the evil for which the individual is responsible. In Daniel's case this is illustrated in a response extracted from our eighth counseling session.

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, p. 249.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 406.

Daniel: Some people say man comes from apes. Others say man was made from dirt, from the soil of the earth. Others say God's hands . . . that he made man with his hands. I don't know, but things are pretty screwed up. [with increased anger in his voice] If he is up there, he's not so perfect, you know, not the perfect machine. [long pause, then softly] Why did he let him die? Why did he let him die? I can't understand it. What was I supposed to do? I didn't know he was going to die. [long pause, slumped over the table with his head resting on his hands]

Chaplain: You're damn mad at God for what he did . . . and for leaving you alone like that . . . all alone.

Daniel: I'm left holding the bag, and there's nothing I can do about it now.

Chaplain: There's nothing.

Daniel: There's no hope. [pause] I've been walking down a dead end street, and there's no way out. There's a wall, so high you can't get over it, so low you can't get under it, so wide you can't go around it. You've got to go in through the door, except there isn't one. I'm caught in it, that's all.

Chaplain: You feel like there's no way out for you.

Daniel: No there isn't. [pause] I don't have anything. I've lost everything I've ever had. [pause] Maybe it's my fault. . . . Maybe it *is* me.

Chaplain: That's a possibility, isn't it.

Daniel: Yeah, you know, that's right, that is a possibility. Maybe it really is me.

This constituted a real turning-point in the counseling process. It introduced the element of guilt and a confessional dimension in the subsequent counseling sessions. Curran asserts that we cannot separate the feelings of guilt and sin from the whole psychological process of personal and social responsibility, without weakening the person psychologically.[33] Properly then, the counseling process becomes a movement from a negative irresponsibility to a positive responsibility for oneself, a process of growing self-integration. Until this occurs, guilt remains as a sign of alienation from self and self-rejection.

The doctrine of original sin maintains that the inclination to sin is part of the given potential for personality development.[34] Man's sinfulness implies that there is nothing within him by which he can redeem himself from his slavery to sin. But sin here is not intended only as a description of man's helplessness, but as a guide for the direction in which to seek help. In this context, pastoral counseling can be understood as a redemptive process which prepares the individual to receive the gospel: its conviction of sin and its affirmation of the forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ.

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[33] Charles A. Curran, *Religious Values in Counseling and Psychotherapy* (New York, 1969), p. 129.

The role that confession can play in the therapeutic process makes it a distinct need among people in the midst of crisis. Carrol Wise suggests that pastoral counseling can become a method for hearing confessions based on the scientific knowledge of personality. The scientific counterpart of confession is catharsis, in that the need for confession is the need of the individual to give expression to his guilt, and the other destructive emotions of anxiety and resentment usually associated with guilt.[35] The individual does not simply relate that he has these feelings, but actually releases them in the context of counseling. Confession, then, is part of, and subsequent to, the release of these destructive emotions through self-expression. As in Daniel's case, the destructive feelings of resentment had to be discharged in order to move more constructively beyond the mechanisms of projection. Symbolically, this discharge of resentment is the door in the wall which Daniel was looking for in his dead-end experience. Having released the predominant pressure of resentment, Daniel could then express his guilt. This catharsis was preparation for the experience of acceptance, and finally forgiveness. This same experience is described by the psalmist:

> When I declared not my sin, my
>   body wasted away
> through my groaning all day
>   long.
> For day and night thy hand was
>   heavy upon me;
> my strength was dried up as by
>   the heat of summer.
> I acknowledged my sin to thee,
>   and I did not hide my iniquity;

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[34] Hulme, p. 107.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 39-40.

I said, "I will confess my transgres-
sions to the Lord";
then thou didst forgive the guilt
of my sin.
(Ps. 32:3-5)

The temptation of the pastor to give reassurance, and too quickly pronounce absolution, can halt the flow of catharsis. In Daniel's case it would have been easy to concur with his resentments, and confirm the collective guilt of his family and society. But this would have violated the dialectical tension which must be maintained between original sin and personal responsibility. The task with Daniel was not to maximize the contributing factors of his background, but also without ignoring them, not minimize his negative feelings, particularly his guilt. This part of the confessional process not only brought the full impact of Daniel's sin to consciousness, but also effected the release of destructive emotions which would otherwise have blocked any full reception of acceptance.

"Psychologically it is the discrimination and communication of guilt in terms of sin and the reasons for sin, rather than a vague and general sense of guilt, that constitutes the process of confession of sins."[36] In the course of counseling, many details of a person's life come up for consideration. Pastoral counseling, however, ought to be more than the mere accumulation of facts, it ought to assist the individual to work through these facts on a deeper level. This may very well occur as counseling becomes, among other things, a form of confession. In the process, the anxiety and guilt, previously directed toward people in the individual's family or extended group, become a clearly focused sense of sin in relation to God.[37] This refocuses the individual's perspective to his relationship to God. In this context, Jesus Christ offers forgiveness to redeem the relationships with God and men, by removing the element which destroyed these relationships initially—sin.

[36] Curran, p. 83.

[37] Wayne E. Oates, *Protestant Pastoral Counseling* (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 185.

SERMON

SAINTS IN SLIPPERY PLACES

BY T. WEBSTER BRENNER, JR.

> But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,
>   my steps had well nigh slipped.
> Until I went into the sanctuary of God;
>   then I perceived their end.
> Nevertheless I am continually with thee;
>   thou dost hold my right hand.
>
> Psalm 73:2, 17, 23

> "If God is God he is not good,
> If God is good he is not God."

How WELL this little verse sums up the way we so often feel as we struggle through the sufferings and injustices of life. Think about it for a moment; reflect upon your own experience. If God is God, he cannot be good; for look at all the suffering and evil and wickedness in the world—and look at all the injustices you and I have to face daily. Yet, if we say that God is good, as we so glibly teach our children to say at grace, then we must draw the conclusion that this good God is not really running the world; he is not really God, for the evil persists.

How can we believe in the value of life, the purpose or meaning of our own existence, in a world where it appears that life cannot really be justified? Who could possibly say that there is justification in a world in which our lives are filled with so much inexplicable suffering? Oh, we don't mind suffering too much when we do something wrong; that's one of the rules of the game. But when we're innocent—life just isn't fair!

How can we explain God in a time in which millions upon millions of people are destroyed and mutilated for no other crime than being born in this century, or belonging to a certain race, or living in a certain city? We who try to be godly suffer; while the wicked, the ungodly, the people who don't even try—they have all they want, and life

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handles them with kid gloves. What's the sense in even trying in a world like this? And who in his right mind can believe in the justice of God in a world where the innocent perish in vast numbers from the onslaughts of life, while the really rotten people prosper?

We ask ourselves, with Hamlet, "whether 'tis nobler to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or, by opposing, end them," and eventually realize that we can do nothing. We're just pawns in a cosmic game of chance. Believe in God in a world like this? Hah! What's the use?

The sad part about all this is that we are the ones who do believe in God, and believe that he is good. Yet oppression, war, economic injustice—these cause men in the church to slip into doubt, or even into unbelief. "God is dead," they cry; and taking a look at the world we are tempted to believe it. "It doesn't matter what is right or wrong any more," the crowds taunt us; and in the midst of moral upheaval we are tempted to toss our hats into the ring of doubt.

Maybe you're not willing to give God up yet. How easy it is to let our faith slip, however, and to give seeds of doubt a chance to grow until we feel the very roots of our soul slipping beyond our meager faith. What can we do? How can we acknowledge God and evil at the same time?

Over 3000 years ago, a man who found himself in the same situation as you and I struggled through with this problem. His name was Asaph, and he was a musician of King David; and it was he who wrote the psalm which is our Scripture lesson this morning. In this psalm is recorded the journey of a soul from doubt to certainty. "How did he do it?" we ask. "How can I do it?"

Listen to Asaph: "My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped." What a vivid description of a faith that is on the rocks! "I almost slipped; I nearly lost my footing." (Moffatt) Isn't that the way we so often feel? We don't really deny God; we don't declare ourselves atheists or agnostics, but—oh, how we can feel our faith slipping away as we watch helplessly. We begin to wonder, "Can God actually do anything? Is he worth believing in?" And our foothold on the meaning and purpose in life begins to fall out from under us. The Hebrew word implies that Asaph felt his faith being "poured out like water, or made as nothing"; and he began to see why.

What made this man of God begin to slip from faith to doubt? "For I was envious of the foolish, and the prosperity of the wicked." From his little corner of the world it looked to Asaph as though there was no sign of God in the affairs of men. It looked as if God were certainly failing in his job of ruling the world the way it ought to be run! Asaph looked around him; and what he saw extinguished his godly optimism like a candle in a windstorm.

The wicked prospered and grew richer. They suffered no physical or emotional pains. They became proud, and flaunted their successes. They even mocked God: "How does he know what's going on?" And yet, they came out on top of life's problems. Asaph couldn't take it any longer. He began to doubt if there ever was any justice in life, or any moral order. He had been good all his life. He had kept the commandments and trusted in God; he had been obedient, virtuous, devout. And he felt he had been crushed like a worm under foot. I can hear Asaph saying: "Well, if I can't beat them, I may as well join them."

What about you and me? How do we react when we have a flat-tire on the way to church, while our neighbor manages to get to the golf-course without any trouble, and breaks one-hundred when he gets there? What about the girl who leads a moral life, while her promiscuous classmate seems to have all the fun and dates? Why should we have to spend two weeks in the hospital, while a crooked politician spends two weeks in Bermuda? "Man, I wish I had his luck," we say.

Like Asaph, we begin to slip. We don't see why we should have to be so good; or why we should bother to go to church; or why we can't join in the no-holds-barred, picnic attitude toward life. Just as envy leads to doubt, so that doubt can very easily become unbelief. Why don't we just give up?

Listen again to Asaph: "I *almost* slipped . . . until I went into the sanctuary of God." Many a man, disillusioned about God, would become cynical; he would stop going to church, assume the role of an agnostic, and throw away his religion altogether. But not Asaph! He realized that this was the foolish thing to do, for then he would be turning his back on the only resource which might prove equal to his problems.

And so, Asaph decided to look at the problem from a different perspective: he decided to put himself where God could deal with him. He returned to religion with new searching; he re-examined his beliefs; he began to doubt his doubts.

Whether this "sanctuary" was a wilderness tent, or the great Temple in Jerusalem, we do not know. It may have been a clearing of Asaph's mind and spirit, throwing out old doubts and fears, making room for the Spirit of God. Whatever, wherever it was, Asaph had an encounter with the living God, and the God of the living. When Asaph had tried to view God through glasses of a worldly perspective, he saw only a blur. But when he looked at the world through the glasses of a godly perspective, the pieces fell into place. Asaph was given a new hold on life, and his downward plunge into unbelief was halted by a revelation of God.

The same holds true for you and me. When we feel the bottom has dropped out, when we've slipped as low as we can get without going over the brink of unbelief, where can we go? Not to reason: for reason has already told us that life is not as it should be. We cannot reason away evil or suffering or doubt. Not to morality: for morality with no basis will only make us more confused and frustrated. Besides, we are already moral (so we say)—it's the rest of the people who are immoral. Not to religion: for pious words and ritualistic acts will make us only more convinced of our own righteousness. In doubling our religious effort, we perhaps only double our religious doubts.

Where should we go? As Asaph, into the presence of God; we must make ourselves open to the immortal, invisible, unchangeable God. Then, and then only, can we see life from God's perspective, and have the revelation Asaph had.

What did Asaph learn that gave him the strength to return to life with faith in God? First, he saw that there is indeed justice in God's world; that a man's "being" is more important than a man's "having." In the outside world it seemed that material success was all that mattered; that evil and ungodliness paid high dividends. Proud, immoral, sinful men seemed to enjoy the rewards promised to the righteous—prosperity, strength, long life, a peaceful death. But in God's presence: How different things looked! Asaph saw the fate of the wicked, doomed to destruction like a house built on shifting sands. "I almost slipped," says Asaph, but "*surely* thou dost set them in slippery places."

One truth now impressed itself upon Asaph's mind: Evil, no matter how it is disguised, is still evil in God's eyes. He was able to see the wicked as they really are: possessed by fears, anxieties, hidden yearnings; their triumphs and prosperity only temporary. The strong hand of a just and righteous God was still in control.

Why are we so anxious to establish the truth of God's justice, as though it were a comforting fact? Another Psalmist admitted that "in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Here is a burning truth we must learn!

In his satire, *The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis takes us with a busload of ghosts who are making a trip from their home in hell to visit heaven, in hopes of remaining there. One ghost meets a man who on earth was convicted and executed for murder. "What I'd like to know," he explodes, "is what you're here for, as pleased as Punch, you, a murderer; while I've been walking the streets down there and living in a place like a pigsty?" The citizen of heaven explains that he has been forgiven; that both he and the man he murdered were reunited at the Judgment Seat of God. But the ghost will not accept it; the injustice of it staggers him. "My rights!" he keeps shouting, "I've got to have my rights same as you." "Oh, no," says the man, "I haven't got my rights or I shouldn't be here. You will not get yours either, but something better." But nothing satisfies the ghost, who protests that he is not looking for mercy but justice, not realizing that justice is exactly what he's got!

We should spend less time trying to remove the splinter from God's eye, and more time removing it from our own; for God is not mocked, and whatever a man sows, that is what he will reap. When we enter into God's presence we should realize that justice will not help us any more than it will help the worst sinner, but only mercy: mercy which God has promised and given through Jesus Christ. Only by relying upon his righteousness and not our own can we hope to be justified before God.

A second truth broke upon Asaph as he examined life while in the sanctuary: His view was turned upon himself, and he saw his own foolishness and blasphemy. Asaph then did a very sensible thing; he forgot about the wicked and took a good long look at himself. What of his own sin, his own faithlessness, his blasphemy in telling God how to rule the world? He was like a child refusing to play a game because he couldn't make up the rules; or like a house pet, expecting a piece of meat for performing a trick and a swat with a stick for chewing up the newspaper. He finally admits: "I was stupid and ignorant, like a beast toward thee."

Which one of us has God appointed to sit on his supreme court? Yet we have the audacity to tell God how to run our lives; we think we can decide for God whom to punish and whom to reward, or decide who is righteous and who is not. Samuel Johnson once said: "Even God himself does not presume to judge a man until he is dead." Why should we?

How important that we see the folly of our judgment, for we judge according to the world's standards. When we compare ourselves to many of the people around us, we look "pretty good." But when we measure ourselves by God's standards, we don't quite measure up. When we compare our best efforts with the perfection of Christ, when we see how "good" our righteousness really is, then we see how far we have slipped from the path God would have us follow. When we can put aside our self-righteous pride, then we can see what God wants us to be; and then, with God's help, we can begin the journey back into full fellowship with him.

Having seen God, and in that light having seen himself, Asaph now saw that in the midst of all his problems and suffering, his doubts and confusion, even while he was slipping away from God, God had not forsaken him. "I am continually with thee," says Asaph to God; "thou hast held me by my right hand."

The darkest element in Asaph's gloom was not that he was suffering, but that he might be suffering alone—without God to care or guide. Looking at life from the right perspective, however, Asaph discovered that God had been there all along, leading him by the hand. He found that the religious man may not suffer less for being religious, but he does not suffer alone. The righteous man may have no less confusion around him for being righteous, but at least he himself need not be confused. Asaph was still just as poor, just as far from success or popularity, but he had God. This was the victory of religious experience; nothing could separate him from God's love.

Do you remember the first time you tried to roller-skate? It was an unpleasant experience at the beginning, wasn't it? You realized how easy it was to slip and fall when you tried to go anywhere by yourself. What enabled you to continue? It was the help and assurance that came from someone standing beside you, holding your hand as you went along. This is the help that God gives: upholding and guiding, even when you cannot see him.

Realizing the fullness of God's presence, doubt is gone; cheap faith is cast out and replaced by a faith that has met the test of life's firing line. Like Asaph, we must realize that the only answer to the puzzle of life's injustice lies not in a redistribution of prizes, but in a relationship between persons, between you and God. You can reach out your hand and know that God will grasp it. The journey may still be dark and dangerous at times, but through it all we can still go on, for we can see the light of home. We can go on in his strength, for God responds: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Thus the psalm tells the story of one man's struggle against a life without God. Asaph was down, but not out; slipping, but not fallen; and God caught him and held him up. And yet, this can be every man's story; it can be our story, for in all these years life has not changed, man has not changed, and God has not changed.

The Christian faith does not guarantee us an easy road through life, nor a short-cut to eternal bliss. Staggering doubts about the justice of God in a world of injustice still come upon us, and threaten to throw our faith off balance. Indeed, we do not use the cross as a good-luck charm, but as a symbol to remind us of the injustice and the suffering of the innocent; a sign of man's injustice to a loving God.

Yet, we use the cross also as a symbol of this love of God for us, of God's supreme act of mercy rather than the justice we so richly deserve. In this intervention of divine love into a world of hate, God was reaching out. He is still reaching out. But he does not remove us from the world of evil, for being a Christian is not easy: Christ never promised us a bed of roses, but only a crown of thorns. Life will still present reasons for doubt; if it did not, there would be no need for faith. And God still holds a steadying hand out to his saints in life's slippery places. We have the assurance that the good, if they slip, are sustained by the Lord; and he raises up those who fall.

"I almost slipped, until I went into the sanctuary of God; thou dost hold me, and will guide me to glory." This is the testimony of one who was there. And through the centuries comes God's promise to us in the person of his Son: "For lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

ABOUT THE COVER

The Byzantine-inspired double eagle which has become DIMENSION's cover symbol has a long and mysterious history. A single eagle is a more familiar Christian symbol, representing not only St. John the Evangelist, but in some circles baptism, the Ascension of Christ, and the Last Judgment. The double eagle (actually a double-headed eagle) appears most commonly in the Byzantine Empire as an emperor's symbol, suggesting the combination of cross and crown in the single figure of the divinely favored ruler. It was used on coins and tapestries, and as architectural ornamentation. Double eagles can still today be found adorning Greek Orthodox churches, especially in the monasteries of Mt. Athos.

The history of the double eagle before Byzantine times is nearly lost. Specimens have been found in architectural remains of the Hittite kingdoms, leading to speculation that it was introduced into Byzantium and Europe by crusaders returning from Turkey and the Holy Land. Another intriguing theory associates the Roman Janus, two-headed god of beginnings, with the Christian single eagle, which also has to do with the new beginnings of baptism, ascension, and judgment.

DIMENSION's double eagle symbolizes above all the theologian working in two "dimensions," the church and the secular world. It represents academic theology and practical ministry, not as separate, but as two aspects of the same ministry, two perspectives on the saving work of Jesus Christ, two dimensions of the minister's life as a man called by God to be his servant.

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